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IMAGINATIVE

BIOGRAPHY

BY

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SIR EGERTON BRYDGES, BART.

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By Imaginative Biography I mean, an Imaginary Superstructure on the known facts of the Biography of eminent characters.

E. B.

Geneva,
Feb. 1, 1834.

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IMAGINATIVE BIOGRAPHY.

LORD FALKLAND.

THE beautiful character drawn of LORD FALKLAND by Lord Clarendon has been supposed by some persons to be too highly coloured: I see no reason for this suspicion; nay, the suspicion seems to me ungenerous. Lord Falkland had commenced his political career with some tendency to the popular side, but went over to the king. Many other great men did the same: they saw that the great agitators, and opponents to the court, had dishonest

views. This very able, accomplished, and learned nobleman, had made his mansion at Burford, in the vicinity of Oxford, the resort of the Muses; but I need not describe what Clarendon has related in so lively a manner from personal knowledge.

They who were enjoying all the advantages of rank and wealth, rendered illustrious by genius, vast acquirements, polished manners, and exalted virtues, foresaw the gathering tempests with a horror and indignation, which fortitude and magnanimity could not pacify. Some of the abstract principles of those who opposed the conduct of the crown were just; but there was a fierce spirit of revolutionary downfall in their passions, at which all good and prudent men trembled. Hampden, set up among the gods of the people, was an equivocal character, let Lord Nugent say what he will. On the other hand, Wentworth was arbitrary

unconciliatory, and unbending; and the prelate Laud was bigoted, foolish, and hateful. Charles had inherited tyrannical notions from his father, and had been confirmed in them by the minion Buckingham. Every thing was unsound on both sides, and the mines of future explosion had long been preparing.

The queen had brought from France the doctrines and temper of despotic government, and the uxorious weakness of the king gave her a dangerous influence. It is probable that no ability and prudence at this time could have entirely allayed the outbreak of a storm which had been so long brooding; but acts of singular stultification by the monarch and his ministers hastened it. Yet we ought not to judge of these acts by modern notions of policy, wisdom, and right.

No reasonable ground of doubt regarding the purity of Lord Falkland's motives has been

established. The monarch wisely called him to assist in the government, in the belief that his reputation for integrity and liberal principles would show to the people that it was his wish to do them justice. But there were among the most powerful leaders of reform men who had much farther views than the obtainment of mere justice and right.

Falkland early saw whither things were tending. When the sword was drawn, he had but one part to take. His life had hitherto been studious rather than active; but he had a great soul in a little body. It was painful to be called away from his beloved studies, but he did not hesitate when duty called; yet the luxuries of an intellectual life had been to him intense.

He wrote, like many others not professing to be positive poets, *occasional poetry*, that is, verses rather suggested by particular occasions

than springing from invention; and he wrote them well—with a moral force and just sentiment.

Hallam expresses an high opinion of him, but thinks that he was more fitted for speculation than for practical affairs. I know not on what ground he forms this judgment. That he should have been weary of state-business at this time can excite no surprise; no practical wisdom could be equal to stem the tide of the troubled waters which were now breaking the banks and overflowing the land. The demon of dissension stirred up the ocean to its bottom.

Lord Falkland, though an Englishman, was not an English, but a Scotch, peer, his father having been so created 1620, and having been lord-deputy of Ireland. He was born about 1610, and was killed at the battle of Newbury, 1643, in his thirty-fourth year, at which battle

his friend George Lord Chandos had his horse killed under him. They had discoursed much together before they entered the field.

Lord Falkland. Our fate is approaching.

Lord Chandos. I have a sad gloom upon me.

Falkland. A close is better than these doubts.

Chandos. Death, or victory!

Falkland. The gloom and troubles of life have for some time been too heavy for me.

Chandos. You have had the weight of affairs upon you;—I have been an idler.

Falkland. I entered upon them most unwillingly: I long refused; but I was at last necessitated to yield to the commands of my sovereign.

Chandos. You could not do otherwise; and nothing could serve the king's cause more than your high and undoubted reputation.

Falkland. As I had taken a part against the crown, while I thought it was doing wrong, so

I could not refuse my humble aid when it required support, lest it should be supposed that I still adhered to the same side.

Chandos. Done with the virtuous magnanimity and generous uprightness which has distinguished every act of your life!

Falkland. I do not deserve your praise; I am but a frail, feeble, and unhappy creature.

Chandos. Throw off your melancholy;—we may be rising this day to peace and glory!

Falkland. Yes; I see a ray in the dark cloud before me.

Chandos. It has for some time been massy and unbroken darkness.

Falkland. Without peace there can now be no comfort for us on earth.

Chandos. I see a resolution to pursue us all to the scaffold, to pillage our estates, and to leave our children beggars.

Falkland. The opposition to the court began in justice; but when the torrent was raised, bad men rode upon it and directed it.

Chandos. Families are raised against themselves, and brothers against brothers; my cousin, Sir John Bridges of Wilton, has taken the parliament's side.

Falkland. Strafford's intemperance was very mischievous.

Chandos. And the prelatical pride of Laud!

Falkland. But it is easy to comment after events have proved results.

Chandos. Great mistakes have, no doubt, been committed.

Falkland. Had the king been the wisest and the most unvacillating of monarchs, there have been many occasions on which it would have availed nothing.

Chandos. Too many men of powerful influence received disobligations from the court.

Falkland. The queen's favourites always did evil, and gave bad advice.

Chandos. Yes; I never could bear such men as Holland and Jermyn.

Falkland. They who have *extorted* concessions from the crown, have very naturally suspected that the concessions were not sincere.

Chandos. Yes; many of them were something in the nature of *duresse!*

Falkland. The king's mind is unfortunately not firm: he yields with a bad grace.

Chandos. Nature gave him many high qualities.

Falkland. He has a very strict and anxious conscience; but his education was bad; and he has many prejudices.

Chandos. Strafford instilled into him many imprudent notions: did he not?

Falkland. No doubt: he was an unfortunate minister for the temper of the age.

Chandos. But would any accommodations have satisfied the people?

Falkland. I am afraid not: but the manner in which many accommodations were granted, gave a colour to those who veiled their designs under the profession of popular rights.

Chandos. Is it not so in all human contests?—are there not faults on both sides?

Falkland. Yes;—and we must choose the side on which justice predominates.

Chandos. I have no doubt there was a large party who resolved from the commencement to tread the crown in the dust.

Falkland. The moment I felt myself assured of this, I joined the royal standard.

Chandos. The king, when he ascended the throne, had not a just notion of the constitutional rights of the parliament.

Falkland. Certainly not!—When there was

a threat to impeach Buckingham, his conduct was very indiscreet.

Chandos. As I am younger than you, and never had your experience in public affairs, I am anxious to hear opinions as well as facts from you.

Falkland. I have accustomed myself to speak frankly at all times: I feel we are at this moment on an awful precipice, when it doubly becomes me to be sincere and true.

Chandos. The crisis is indeed solemn.

Falkland. I have no fear: my heart half exults;—but it is a sad exultation!

Chandos. There is a redness in the dawn which has a more than usual depth of tint.

Falkland. We must not be superstitious: it may overcome the stoutest heart.

Chandos. But there is a superstitious comfort as well as fear.

Falkland. I have had enough of life: the

evil of the times has altered my temper and my character.

Chandos. Your mournfulness has appeared of late in your looks, the tones of your voice, your figure, and your very dress.

Falkland. They tell me that I mutter it in my dreams, and that awake I unconsciously exclaim to myself, "*Peace, peace, peace!*"

Chandos. Indeed, your visage has become pale and haggard.

Falkland. Oh! to see this fair kingdom, once blessed above other nations of Europe, so torn with intestine strife, hatred, and murder!

Chandos. My poor castle of Sudeley, what has become of that? Is it a prey to the flames?

Falkland. Better the flames consume it than the plunderers enjoy the spoil.

Chandos. Oh, Essex! though you have been formerly much wronged by the court, how

could you take the command of such a ruffian army!

Falkland. And my poor insulted king, seeking to preserve a government which he believes has been transmitted to him not merely as a heritage but as a duty, to be thus spit upon by the meanest and most ferocious and ravenous of the rabble—how my soul recoils at it!

Chandos. I remember my aunt, Lady Huntingdon, once predicted these things to me.

Falkland. I knew her, and wrote an epitaph for her.

Chandos. Do you know Milton? My cousin, Lord Brackley, for whom he wrote his Comus, has told me, that Milton, though he had latterly become a stern republican, lamented to him the wicked characters who were getting the lead in the schemes carrying on against the monarchical power. He justified the desire upon abstract theories, which my cousin

said he protested against, but admitted that many of the instruments were brutal, wiley, and satanical.

Falkland. I have not been able to bring myself to think well of Milton, though I pay full admiration to his genius.

Chandos. I have met Milton at my grandmother's, Lady Derby, at Harefield. He is a mild, eloquent, yet somewhat reserved, man; and Brackley says that he is purity and wisdom itself: but he is somewhat magisterial, and he reproved me when I made love to my beautiful cousin, Alice Egerton, Brackley's sister.

Falkland. I am afraid the Puritans infected him with their hypocritical cant.

Chandos. I thought so myself: but Brackley assured me that he saw through the Puritans, and despised them.

Falkland. Lord Brackley is amiable and

good-natured; but I suspect him to be too easy of faith in his friends.

Chandos. He is undoubtedly very candid, and very accomplished, and enamoured of poetry and poets.

Falkland. These times require men to be made of sterner stuff.

Chandos. Yes, we do not now live in the fields of Parnassus, or Elysian gardens.

Falkland. We live in Pandæmonium.

Chandos. Milton is too much addicted to Utopian politics.

Falkland. Those Utopias have been our ruin.

Chandos. Lord Bridgewater expressed himself greatly alarmed at them, and warned Brackley against them.

Falkland. These fanglements of political equality have been concocting from the time of Calvin and Knox.

Chandos. King James irritated them on by the absurdity of his kingly pretensions.

Falkland. And the babyish and cowardly tyranny of his temper.

Chandos. Lord Hertford has often given me curious anecdotes of his jealousy of him.

Falkland. Hertford is rather fond of dwelling on that subject. You would have been more in the king's way than Hertford.

Chandos. I was scarcely born then; the king died when I was a child.

Falkland. More lucky for you! You know that Hertford could never prove his grandmother's marriage!

Chandos. I have not heard much of these things: my mother's unfortunate second marriage to that wretch, Castlehaven, kept me from her.

Falkland. But your grandmother Alice, the

old Countess of Derby, she could tell you much!

Chandos. Yes, but it was an interdicted subject! I have heard that my grandfather, Earl Ferdinando, fell a sacrifice to the political plots on that affair.

Falkland. All these things are nothing now: we are not fighting for light advantages and distinctions:—it is literally *pro aris et focis!*

Chandos. I know it too well: such things are now, indeed, become airy and empty trifles!

Falkland. Crowns are no longer possessions of legal descent; they hang on the point of the sword, and this day may decide them.

Chandos. I tremble,—not for myself, but for the kingdom.

Falkland. We must fight our path this day through blood to peace on earth or in heaven.

Chandos. It is thus that I pledge my vow to you.

Falkland. Want of courage or of enterprize is not a fault laid to my charge; to-day I will do my duty.

Chandos. The dawn was sad;—the full disk of the sun is now got up still redder.

Falkland. Spies come in;—the enemy are in force, and very resolute.

Chandos. We are apt in our gallantry and finery to hold their lank demure looks too cheap.

Falkland. Let us treat them with the scorn they deserve, or die in the attempt!

Chandos. The wind blew last night: and see how thick the autumn leaves lie on the ground. Is this an omen, Falkland?

Falkland. We must rise above omens, and meet death, let him look as terrible as he will!

Chandos. I fear not:—I cannot look on your

calm, fixed, and defying resolution, and not catch the same spirit.

Falkland. I must not look on the beautiful skies that overhang us, the sweet landscape, and the yellow trees, or I shall be in love with earth. It is man alone deforms it.

Chandos. I heard the sound of a bugle from the enemy's camp:—they are on the move!

Falkland. There is no doubt that they mean to make a great struggle to-day.

Chandos. You are apt to be rash: you must consider the immense value of your life to your king and country.

Falkland. Do not check me; do not flatter me, however kindly meant;—I am sick of life. The only joy I feel is in despair!

Chandos. Genius and virtue like yours are gifts to mankind, which must not be sacrificed. By your bodily efforts you can only do what a common soldier can do as well as you can.

Falkland. I can set an example of daring, which may inspirit a whole body.

Chandos. But spirit in such material contests cannot weigh down matter; and if you fail and lose your precious life, at what a cost will the effort be made!

Falkland. We must not reason on these things—cold calculation will not do; our fate leads us on!

Chandos. You told me not to regard omens.

Falkland. I never had such a weight on my spirits before; yet my resolve was never so stern.

Chandos. What do you gaze at so intensely?

Falkland. I would away my eyes from those clouds—but I cannot—they take such strange shapes!

Chandos. There is a louder sound of the bugle:—they are advancing!

Falkland. To horse!—to horse!—we must be among the foremost!

That day and that hour was his last; he rushed into the battle, and was slain by a musket-shot, on the 20th September, 1643.

I will add a sonnet written by Lord Falkland not long before his death.

The glory of the past! 'tis thus delights
Imagination to throw back her rays.
The mind is form'd in retrospective view
A thousand joys and grandeurs to behold.
There ever mingles in material sights
Some earthly blemish that the spell betrays;
The spiritual vision casts a brilliant hue,
That clothes its objects in unclouded gold!
When all our outward senses can command,
Some disappointment in its charms contains,
The mental eye, as by a magic wand,
A scene of sweet aerial beauty gains.
They who can see the past in glory clad
May live in pride, though present days be sad!

CHARLES BLOUNT.

"My dear Lady Penelope, are you prepared to share my humble fortunes?" said Sir Charles Blount.—"Willingly, beloved Charles!" she answered; "but the Devereuxes, as you know, love power, and the splendour of wealth."—"I know it too well, my lovely beauty! Your brother has most noble qualities, and altogether I admire and esteem him; but it must be confessed, that he has his vanities and his incontrollable passions; and his imprudences will, I believe, never leave him."—"I am afraid not: I am too sensible of them; and I will tell

you fairly, Charles, that I have often wondered how you could long keep on such amicable terms with him."—"Why?"—"Because, to tell the truth, you are so mild, so melancholy, so considerate, so learned, and of that gentle wisdom;—while he is so impetuous, so fickle, and so full of caprices, so taken up with himself, and so forgetful of every thing but the gratification of the moment, that I cannot conceive two men less congenial to each other."—"Notwithstanding these faults, I love his sallies of generosity, and flashes of splendour. I love him too, Penelope, because he is your brother. But will he consent to our marriage?"—"I am afraid not!"—"What do you suppose the chief obstacle?"—"All our connections have got it into their heads that the marriage with Lord Rich will be so much more advantageous in point of fortune."—"A curse on the poverty of our house! which in antiquity,

Penelope, you will not deny to be as honourable as yours; while Rich is nothing but a *parvenu*, and has not in mind or manners shaken off the vulgarity of his origin."—"It is too true, dear Charles, and no one is so proud of descent as my brother; yet such is human inconsistency."

Blount, who was all tenderness, seized Penelope's white hand, and dropped a tear upon it. He was the handsomest* young man about the court, as well as the most amiable, the most accomplished, the most learned, and the most brave. But he carried his melancholy and his modesty to an excess. Penelope's attachment to him was so extreme, that she would willingly have married him against the consent of all her relations; but his honour and conscience were so high and delicate—

* See an interesting portrait of him in Lodge's Illustrious Heads.

while his pride was so dignified, that he himself declined to take this step.

The struggle continued for more than a year. She scoffed at Lord Rich, and treated him with every indignity: but he admired her beauty, and was flattered by the illustrious blood it would bring to his family, and he had too little feeling to regard what were her own sentiments to him.

Blount now succeeded his brother as Lord Mountjoy, but with a very decayed patrimony; but Queen Elizabeth received him into high favour, and employed him in a great military command in Ireland, where he was eminently successful. Penelope would have followed his fortunes over the world, as Emma would Harry, in Prior's Nut-brown Maid; and was only at last persuaded to marry Lord Rich by a trick. A false account was brought to her that he, to whom she had thus vowed her love, had

deserted her, and married another. In her rage she consented to the match her family wished, in two days, before she had time to discover the falsehood; and the night before she married she wrote Lord Mountjoy a most reproachful, but most pathetic and eloquent letter.

As he was at that time engaged in military services at a distance, it was long before the truth was entirely cleared up. He was deeply affected by the event; and though he exerted himself to fulfil his duty, his profound grief seriously alarmed the friends who were about him. He had always a tendency to grave aberrations of mind, and when not in busy action, he shewed many symptoms of insanity. But he governed himself so far, that now the deed was done, he forbore to write to Lady Rich. She, on her part, conducted herself less prudently. Her original dislike

to her husband grew every day stronger and stronger.

Lord Mountjoy had other afflictions: he was deeply afflicted, first by the extravagant and mad conduct, and then by the unhappy but deserved death of Lord Essex. Whenever he could escape from public duty, he buried himself in the most unapproachable retirement, and gave himself up to his sorrows, his meditations, and his books. His reflections, even by nature, were plaintive and moral, and the events of his life had doubled the darkness of their hues. Nature had probably designed him to be a recluse poet, who fed in solitude upon his own visions. He would have been happier in that lot with a mere competence, if he had had no unlucky attachment to disturb him. Minds, which love deep thinking, are never easy to be in constant action; they want leisure and quiet for the working of their

brains, and the unbroken emotions of their hearts. I do not believe that they whose bodies are in constant motion ever think; and for some, any bodily exercise is not absolutely necessary.

The chief stock of the Blounts had been of baronial rank, from the time of the Conquest; and they had been originally learned men and philosophers, as well as men of the sword. Queen Elizabeth was so struck with the countenance and person of Charles when he appeared at court in his first youth, that, as Sir Robert Naunton says in his Fragmenta Regalia, she could not keep her coquetish eyes from him.

She daunted his modesty by her stare, and soon finding out that he was of the old nobility, which she loved, she addressed him, and gave him the most gracious assurances of her future protection. With his slender for-

tunes in an age of expensive show, he could not but be gratified at this: but it was mingled with many painful sensations and reflections; his pride was hurt, his diffidence was outraged, he went home, and felt abased, and wept. For two days he half resolved to go and hide himself in a cottage in the woods. He did not dare tell this to his brother, who would only have reproached him. Solitude will not do for all mankind; but for a few of rich minds and tender spirits it is the best. And had Lord Mountjoy now shut himself up, his life, which ended in its flower, might have been extended to a rich old age.

When he returned to court, Lady Rich did not fail to renew her acquaintance with him. She soon learned that she had been deceived, and that he was not in fault. Her fondness for him revived in all its force. For a long while, though he could not cure his love, he

kept his virtue,—even in defiance of Lord Rich's taunts and insults.

Daniell in his noble Funeral poem upon him speaks thus of his mind:—

" Though thou had'st made a general survey,
Of all the best of men's best knowledges;
And knew as much as ever learning knew,
Yet did it make thee trust thyself the less;
And less presume, and yet when being mov'd
In private talk to speak thou didst bewray
How fully fraught thou wert within, and prov'd
That thou did'st know whatever wit could say:
Which show'd thou had'st not books as many have;
For ostentation, but for use, and that
Thy beauteous memory was such, as gave
A large revenue of the good it got.
Witness so many volumes, whereto thou
Hast sat thy notes under thy learned hand,
And mark'd them with that point as will shew how
The point of thy conceiving thought did stand.
That none would think if all thy life had been
Turn'd into leisure, thou could'st have attain'd

So much of time, to have perus'd and seen
So many volumes, that so much contain'd;
Which furniture may not be deem'd least rare
Among those ornaments, that sweetly dight
Thy solitary Wanstead,* where thy care
Had gather'd all which heart or eyes delight.
With such a season, such a temperature,
Wert thou composed, as made sweetness one;
And held the tenor of thy life still sure,
In consort with thyself in perfect tone;
And never man had heart more truly serv'd,
Under the regiment of his own care;
And was more at command, and more observ'd
The colours of that modesty he bare
Than that of thine, in whom men never found
That any shew of speech obscene could tell
Of any vein thou hadst that was unsound,
Or motive of thy powers that turn'd not well.
And vast was thy provision laid within;
Thus wert thou to thyself, and now remains

* The library at his seat at Wanstead, in Essex.

What to the world thou outwardly hast been;
What the dimension of that side contains,
Which likewise was so goodly and so large,
As shews that thou wert born to adorn the days
Wherein thou liv'st, and also to discharge
Those parts which England and thy fame should raise.
Although in peace thou seem'dst to be all peace,
Yet being in war, thou wert all war, and there,
As in thy sphere, thy spirits did never cease
To move with indefatigable care,
And nothing seemed more to animate thy heart
Nor more enlarge thee into jollity
Than when thou saw'st thyself in woman's girt,
Or any act of arms like to be nigh."

There are those who will think this extract of old-fashioned poetry too long: to see the intensity of moral thought, and plain strength of language, are delightful; and I cannot refrain therefore from giving a few more of the venerable old bard's lines. He is speaking of

the favours heaped on Lord Mountjoy by Queen Elizabeth; he goes on:—

" Which fair and happy blessing thou might'st well
Have far more rais'd, had not thine enemy,
Retired privacy, made thee to tell
Thy greatness for thy quiet, and deny
To meet fair Fortune, when she came to thee.
For never man did his preferment fly,
And had it in that eminent degree
As thou, as if it sought thy modesty;
For that which many, whom ambitious toils
And tortures with their hopes hardly attain,
With all their thrusts, and shuddering plots and wiles,
Was easily made thine without thy pain."

James I. on coming to the English throne, created Lord Mountjoy, *Earl of Devonshire*, and continued him in the office of Lord Lieutenant of Ireland. On his return from Ireland, he found that Lady Rich had abandoned her husband, and had been divorced from him.

He now therefore married her, the ceremony being performed by Laud, afterwards archbishop, who was loaded with obloquy for taking on himself this office. Hitherto Lord Devonshire had been the most popular of the great public men: but this affair made a great noise, and he was now covered with reproaches and all the torrent of foul tongues. Probably this clamour was raised by the Puritans, of whose party I presume Lord Rich, (afterwards created Earl of Warwick) was.

Lord Devonshire was in the highest degree sensitive, and naturally melancholy; and this loss of public opinion and esteem sunk to the bottom of his heart.

The marriage took place 26th Dec. 1605, and he only survived till the beginning of April, 1606, when he died of a burning fever, after a few days' illness.

Upon looking back on the poem already

cited, I find it impossible to describe his death-bed so well as it is there described, and therefore I give Daniell's beautiful and affecting words, as Daniell's poems are now little known.

LORD DEVONSHIRE'S DEATH-BED.

" But let it now sufficient be that I
The last scene of his act of life bewray,
Which gives th' applause to all, doth glorify
The work: for 'tis the evening crowns the day;
This action of our death especially
Shews all a man; here only is he faithfully
With what munition he did fortify
His heart, how good his furniture hath been:
And this he did perform in gallant wise;
In this did he confirm his worthiness;
For on the morrow after the surprise
That sickness made on him, with fierce access;
He told his faithful friend whom he held dear,
And whose great worth was worthy so to be,
How he knew those hot diseases were
Of that contagious force, as he did see

That men were overtumbled suddenly;
And therefore did desire to set a course
And order to his affairs as speedily
As might be ere his sickness should grow worse.
And as for death, said he, I do not weigh,
I am resolv'd and ready in this case;
It cannot come t'affright me any way,
Let it look never with so grim a face:
And I will meet smiling; for I know
How vain a thing this world's glory is!
And herein did he keep his word, did shew
Indeed as he had promised in this:
For sickness never heard him groan at all,
Nor with a sigh consent to shew his pain;
Which, however, being tirannical,
He sweetly made it look, and did retain
A lovely countenance of his being well;
And so would ever make his tongue to tell
Although the fervor of extremities
Which often doth throw those defences down,
Which in our health wall in infirmity,
Might open lay more than we would have known;

Yet did no idle word in him bewray
Any one piece of nature ill set in;
Those lightnesses, that any thing will say,
Could say no ill of what they know within.
Such a sure look of silent modesty
Was set in tipe upon that noble heart,
As that no anguish, nor extremity
Could open it to impair that worthy part;
For having dedicated still the same
Unto devotion, and to sacred skill,
That furnish perfect half, that blessed flame,
Continued to the last in fervour still;
And when his spirit and tongue no longer
Do any certain services beside;
When at the point of parting they unfold,
With fervent zeal, how only he relied
Upon the merits of the precious death
Of his Redeemer, and with rapt desires
H' appeals to grace, his soul delivereth
Unto *the hand of mercy*, and expires.
Thus did that worthy, who most virtuously
And mildly liv'd, most sweet and mildly die.

And thus, great patron of my Muse, have I
Paid thee my vows, and freely clear'd th' accounts
Which in my love I owe thy memory.
And let me say, that herein there amounts
Something unto thy fortune, that thou hast;
This monument of thee perhaps may last;
Which does not t' every mighty man befall,
For, lo! how many, when they die, die all.
And this doth argue too thy great deserts,
For honour never brought unworthiness
Further than to the grave; and there it parts,
And leaves men's greatness to forgetfulness.
And we do see that nettles, thistles, brakes,
The poorest works of nature, tread upon
The proudest frames that man's invention makes,
To hold his memory when he is gone.
But, Devonshire, thou hast another tomb,
Made by thy virtues in a safer room!

SAMUEL DANIELL."

I do not know how to draw in prose so beautiful a character as this, nor how to lament his

death in such moral, such tender, and such noble language! Let it be remembered that this is no fanciful picture: there is a concurrence of authorities for it. Let us contemplate this amiable and accomplished man in his solitary study at Wanstead! Let us suppose the first luxury of quiet in the midst of his books, after the harassments, the anxieties, the bustle, and bodily fatigue of a most difficult and odious military command, over civil dissensions and savage rebellions! She who had his first love at length by his side, and bound to him by conjugal ties! A week, perhaps a fortnight, of this tranquil happiness, when all the meditative energies of his soul were in their full vigour and freshness! then comes, as it were upon the wings of the wind, the full cry and clamour of obloquy and detraction, and falsehood with her thousand-forked tongues! It comes when his soul is opened to all tenderness, and when

quiet makes the assault tenfold more impressive. He could have borne it in the din and activity of war and engrossing public business; but now so unexpectedly, and when his temperament is become all spiritualized, it oversets him at once!

GEORGE CLIFFORD,

EARL OF CUMBERLAND.

Sam. Daniell, the poet. WHAT makes you so grave to-day, my lord?

Lord Cumberland. I am by nature moody and restless.

Daniell. You have high rank, illustrious birth, ancient titles, a feudal patrimony of magnificent extent, and a splendid personal character.

L. Cumb. All do not make me happy.

Daniell. I admit that happiness lies in the mind; but you have a mind that should make you happy.

L. Cumb. My passions are stronger than my reason. I have an anxious and morbid temper.

Daniell. What is desirable that you have not?

L. Cumb. Many things; above all, I have not domestic comfort.

Daniell. Permit me, my lord, to speak frankly:—is not that your own fault?

L. Cumb. We are not suited, my friend;—I can scarcely tell why:—Lady C.* is of a cold, peevish disposition. She does not make home pleasant, yet she is angry when I seek foreign adventures.

Daniell. Are you not impatient, my lord?—and is not your speculative mind too wandering for domestic quiet?

L. Cumb. Perhaps so:—the fault may be

* Margaret Russell, daughter of Francis Russell, Earl of Bedford.

mainly mine: but, as you speak freely, I will speak freely also. You know that I am proud —I avow it;—there is something in our blood, Daniell, that will not allow our old families to assort well with these new ones. This may not come out on first appearances: the *parvenus* are jealous, and always struggling to make up for want of hereditary and reflective splendour by personal arrogance. I hate sourness, and an obstinate superciliousness.

Daniell. Do you not find joy at the court, arrayed as you are in so many advantageous distinctions?

L. Cumb. Some momentary triumphs; many severe mortifications.

Daniell. I am aware that it is a capricious court, with many painful rivalities.

L. Cumb. Yes; there is Essex, full of vanities, and conceits, and favours; and that fantastic coxcomb, Oxford, wilful, spiteful, a

would-be poet, and with a head turned with the pride of his ancient earldom, but always angrily watchful lest you should suspect his poverty;—while all the low cunning of all the new Cecils is working under to overset and uproot us all. No one is modest but melancholy and meditative Charles Blount.

Daniell. The queen is a gallant mistress.

L. Cumb. She has many princely, imperial, and noble-minded qualities; but she is wilful, tyrannical, hard, and fantastic. She has had many tempests and many under-streams to stem against, and she has bravely and wisely rode above them, which has shown great worldly talent, and great firmness of heart: but she is not to be relied upon when her own interest or passion draws another way. She has no generous or conscientious scruples; she loves, and yet at times is jealous of us old nobles, and of my house in particular, by my father's first mar-

riage with a Brandon, whose mother was a *Tudor*. She taunts us at times in a way that makes my blood rise.

Daniell. My lord, I admit the justice of all your observations; such, alas! is the imperfection of all human lots and human concerns. There is no satisfaction but in thinking right, and doing right, and then quietly abiding the consequences. My imagination looks to your splendid lot with wonder and delight:—my moral reason and experience tell me that even that lot cannot secure enjoyments or peace without still higher superiorities—the superiorities of intellect and soul.

L. Cumb. I do not wonder, Daniell, at these comments from you; they become you: I know how to value the moral and profound wisdom of your eloquent and instructive poetry; for myself, I often err against my better knowledge. Your sagacity will find excuses for the

early habits attendant on my birth; arms, bustle, activity of body, were planted round my cradle. I am restless, therefore, by habit as well as by nature. I can mingle philosophical quiet with my impatience for action;—but I cannot long sustain it.

Daniell. The quiet must come from a sincere and enlightened mind, so powerful as to rule the heart; and by governing our thoughts, to regulate our emotions. The excitements applied to the courses of a great nobleman's youth in chivalrous times, are, I must confess, not of this kind. He is stirred up, as if by necessity, to emulations and braveries, which keep the whole body and mind in a state of turbulence.

L. Cumb. Ennui soon encounters me in these solitary domains, which seem so magnificent to eyes less used to them. The mountains, valleys, woods, and heaths of Craven,

when I first return from the court, or from a voyage, seem for a few weeks all enchantment; but then the fairy colours fade away, and a dull and insipid bleakness hovers over them, and invests them like a grey cloud. I dream of seas, and adventures, and undiscovered lands.

Daniell. Then, my lord, I have the advantage of you, even with all your glorious appendages. My muse will not suffer such discontents in me. You turn the proud domains of a grand inheritance into scenes as full of spleen as deserts. I make a mean and lonely farm a garden of delights and an Elysian wilderness. Such is the power of a literary imagination, when virtuously exercised, and spent in the chase of beautiful truth. You have read my *Musophilus?*

L. Cumb. I have read it with constant admiration, and constant improvement. It is a

noble poem. It is all deep, subtle and original thought. I am a warrior by birth and by habit; but I love the arts of peace; and, above all, I love a genuine poet; I love what I cannot practise, and admire what I cannot attain.

Daniell. The Cliffords had always in them that fine spirited blood of high nobility, which marks the generous mind and dignified sentiment of true aristocracy. What a sublime soul your virtuous grandfather preserved while hid in the Cumberland mountains in the lot of a shepherd's boy. You are too great for vanity and disguise; with a frankness that wins all hearts, you confess all your foibles, and let out the overflowings of a hero's bosom.

L. Cumb. I scorn to seek the praise of virtues which I know I do not possess. I am conscious that my ambition is unchastised, and that my desires are irregular and unapproved by a strict and calm morality. In the joyous-

ness of an emulous court, and in its vain ostentations I have often partaken of too much pleasure; and then, sick of its dangerous excesses, cursed its vices and its frivolities. While I was ploughing new waves of the unknown ocean, I was more in my element: the hardier employments, and hopes and fears of such grand enterprises, better became the blood of a Clifford. But dreams of milder luxuries would still intervene; and sometimes, when I was rocked and lulled by the whistling of the winds and murmur of the waves, my imagination brought back to me in visions the fair spectacles of the court, high born dames in the softness of their beauty, and tilts and tournaments in all their splendid array, crowned by the prizes of valour, dispensed by ladies' hands, amidst the minstrel's song, and the soul-entrancing sounds of musical harmony. Then again came the weariness of a life of

peril; disgust at the fierce toils and thankless hardships I was undergoing, and a home-sickness which produced momentary deliriums. That sweet little girl there, whom you see playing and gamboling on the bank of the castle foss, she, the only hope of my house, the sole heir of my marriage,—her apparition often appeared before me in those dreams while on my voyage, and beckoned me back to these castles and domestic scenes.

Daniell. She might well engage your thoughts and affections. She will one day shine out a bright star of your native country. We poets are prophets also. She will have all the heroic spirit of the Cliffords, and all the most winning beauties of her sex. She will have her sorrows; but all human bliss glows more nobly when chastised by sorrow. I will watch her, and teach her, and follow her, and

endeavour to immortalize her by the purest and most deeply-wrought strains of my muse.

L. Cumb. Daniell, there is indeed something presageful, mournfully presageful, in those latter words. Something within me now whispers to me that I shall not live to see her grow up.—(At that moment a few tears, vainly endeavoured to be suppressed, rolled down the Earl's cheeks.)—I shall die before I have finished my middle age. I am sometimes weary of life, but yet I would not leave it so soon, nor trust this little girl to the mercy of collaterals, and this ancient inheritance to be struggled for, and torn to pieces by cupidity and the extortions of villanous law-suits.

Daniell (*shocked at having touched a tender string.*) My lord, I speak not of myself as one who could supply the place of a parent; I only anticipate the humble function of tutor. You

are in the flower of your age, the strength of your manhood, and the splendour of your glory; you will live long enough after this feeble form of mine, worn with study and contemplation, rests in the grave.

L. Cumb. We will say no more of that, Daniell: there are presageful feelings which are rarely delusive. It is useless to weaken the mind by brooding upon what thought cannot avert. Dark times are coming, when our gallant and wise queen shall touch that end to which I fear she is approaching. The succession is not settled, and he on whom it is likely to fall is the most pusillanimous and contemptible of beings. It was grievous that the heir of the great house of Derby, my nephew, the accomplished and unambitious Earl Ferdinando, should be sacrificed to this question. How I have abhorred all the intrigues which have been going on of late with the Scotch king!

The Cecils, Cobhams, Northumberlands, Raleighs, they will bring down the weight of the throne to fall on their own heads and crush them.

Daniell. What result do you anticipate to the kingdom at large?

L. Cumb. Fall of glory, and even disgrace! Heroes turned to diplomatists, poets turned to metaphysicians, divines turned to pedants, lawyers turned to corrupt sophists; the court a scene of the most profligate and reckless manners, wasteful expenditure, base and tyrannical extortion; flattery, hypocrisy, falsehood; Scotch favouritism; crouching to foreign nations; enterprise dead, the sword rusted, the ships rotting in harbour.

Daniell. A frightful picture! Will there be no redeeming virtues?

L. Cumb. None. Craft will prevail; and so Cecil will be saved; the valorous, able, and

wise Raleigh will be sacrificed. The Puritans will gain head by the very means—alternately despotic and conceding—by which it will be attempted to suppress them; the Papists will be secretly encouraged, partly through fear and partly through dupery; and foolish schemes and principles of kingcraft will provoke the dissenting sects to a development of political truths which will at last lay the crown in the dust.

Daniell. This is the effect you foresee from placing the throne in the hands of the Scotch king. How can it be prevented?

L. Cumb. I cannot answer that question. It may not be the less true, because I see the evil without seeing the remedy. The other co-heirs in blood to the throne, are liable to many objections. There is a doubtful marriage in the way of the Seymours; Lady Arabella is cracked; Earl Ferdinando's three

daughters, of whose legal claim* there is no doubt, are too young and too feeble. It is said, that conditions have been attempted to be imposed on the monarch-expectant. He is subtle and cunning, though not wise, and will escape from the toils; and as he is revengeful, he will punish with ruin any attempt that fails. —I see such clouds gathering that sometimes I wish to die.

Daniell. I go too heartily with your lordship in all these frightful predictions. In my own humble opinion I am sure that similar evils will take place. Pedantry will press down literary genius, and bury it under its own mass of putridity.

L. Cumb. The queen's ministry will be used for a little while; but they will soon grow tired of their functions. Titles and honours will be conferred in profusion on those to whom the

* See Hallam's Constitutional History, vol. i.

queen in her niggardliness refused them; and this will at first keep them in good humour; but they will loathe the king's meanness and vulgarity. Old Buckhurst, in his youth a great poet, become servile with age and the perpetual intrigues of a court, will hold his office because he is not rich; but he will decay and pine himself to death under its anxieties. Cecil will grumble and fret and fill his purse, and then die with fatigue and care; Raleigh will be hoodwinked; Egerton will keep the seals in his discretion, and live upon the memory of the great princess whom he had formerly served; Sir Robert Sydney will be blinded by the attainment of the titles refused to his glorious brother, Sir Philip; Percy's sun will set; alas, Nevile is gone under a more glorious reign; and *parvenus* will rise in uncountable numbers. Some of the creatures of the Howard family, who have shewn them-

selves so mean under a spirited reign, may perhaps spread their wings doubly and assume more gaudy colours under the hot-bed heat of this rising beam. Alas!

" Visions of *baseness* rise before my sight,
Blacken the distance, and shut out the light."

CHARLES COTTON, THE YOUNGER.

THE ANGLER.

CHARLES COTTON was son of Charles Cotton, the elder, also a poet, of whom Lord Clarendon has given a very interesting character, as one of his early friends. The son is most known by his Book on Angling, annexed to the popular work of old Izaac Walton; but he was a delightful poet, of exquisite simplicity and fineness of sentiment, though rather careless and diffuse. He was a gay companion, and had lived in the world; but his joy was in the country, where he endeavoured to escape from,

and forget, the debts and bailiffs, who harassed his life. Perhaps the quiet of the country is never properly prized but by those who have fled from its reverse; as rest is only keenly tasted after labour, or a feast after hunger. He married a lady of rank, the widow of Cromwell, Earl of Ardglass, in Ireland, and Lord Cromwell in England (who was a descendant of Henry Eighth's Cromwell, Earl of Essex.) With this lady Charles Cotton got a good jointure.

His seat was in Staffordshire, in the neighbourhood of Dovedale.

Mr. Fitzherbert, a neighbour, called, addressing a hoary-headed old servant, a little bare and uncouth in his livery, "Is your master at home?"—The servant looked warily round, and seeing a shabby fellow advancing within hearing, hesitated, and then said, "No, sir."—"Give me leave then," said Fitzherbert, "to

go into the garden, and rest myself on my favourite seat in the shade; for the sun is hot, and I am rather fatigued with my walk, though not three miles."—"Will you not sit down in the parlour, sir, or my master's library?"—"No, Michael; I prefer the open sky, and the garden-walks."—"Ah, sir, they are not in the best trim; master neglects them somewhat."—"Never mind, Michael; I am not one

"Who in trim gardens take my pleasure."

As Fitzherbert passed within the door, the shabby fellow had reached the steps:—"Is 'Squire Cotton at home, I say?"—"No!" answered Michael sternly: "what is your business?"—"Only a message from 'Squire Chetwynd about a beagle as has got into our woods."—"'Squire Chetwynd had better write himself to my master about it."—The fellow while talking was still sidling to the door;

Michael hastily retreated, and banged the door against him. A whistle was heard from behind one of the court-walls, and a rush was at the same time made by another fellow at the back door; but Michael was wary, and at a signal all the out-doors and windows of the mansion were closed. The fellow retreated sullenly, full of deep-muttered curses.

Fitzherbert was sitting quietly on his bench, half soliloquizing two or three of Cotton's beautiful stanzas on Retirement; a sort of tangled wilderness, larger than the garden, was behind him, and he heard a rustle among the leaves; a soft whispered voice echoed back humourously the stanzas he had muttered: he looked behind him;—there sat Cotton, almost entirely embowered by the shade! Fitzherbert began to laugh—"Hush!" he cried, "the myrmidons are abroad." Fitzherbert understood him. They retired separately—Cotton

by stealth—to the library, and there sat impenetrable.

Cotton had good wine in his cellar, and the lightest was brought, suited to the heat of the day. Then began

"The feast of reason, and the flow of soul?"

Cotton. Now let us forget ourselves.

Fitzherbert. I do not wish to forget myself when I hear your conversation, Charles.

Cotton. I am like an April day, alternate sunshine and tears.

Fitzh. But do you not volunteer sorrows? Why are you so careless about your expenses?

Cotton. Drink a glass of wine to that, Fitzherbert:—because I am a fool, and cannot help it.

Fitzh. If you are a fool, Charles, then how nearly are folly and wisdom allied.

Cotton. Well, well; wise one hour, a fool the next. Let us enjoy life while we can.

Fitzh. I am graver than you, Charles, and have none of your difficulties; but I perceive that I have few of your joys.

Cotton. I admit that vicissitude is a primary ingredient of happiness.

Fitzh. You are one, who always contrive to render your indiscretions amiable.

Cotton. Your reproof may be just, but do not introduce it under flowers.

Fitzh. I flatter no one: when praise is merited, I will not withhold it.

Cotton. I love praise, when I do not suspect its sincerity.

Fitzh. Your life has been irregular; your heart has never known any thing but goodness.

Cotton. I have had spirits which ran away with me; but I have never enjoyed any thing

except rural quiet. I was accustomed to embarrassed affairs from childhood:—my father was deeply embarrassed; but it made him gloomy, and I resolved to be merry, and catch at every innocent enjoyment which I could.

Fitzh. I remember your father;—he had a fine moral vein in poetry: but he was peevish, and sarcastic.

Cotton. Sometimes a father's indiscretions are avoided by a son; sometimes he is hardened to them: but my father's were rather unlucky law-suits, than indiscretions of his own.

Fitzh. I remember that droll, Sir Aston Cokayne, used to play upon your father's ill-humour a little too much. I have seen your father frown and put his hand upon his sword, then withdraw it again, when Sir Aston, seeing he had gone too far, contrived some compliment in the shape of a jest.

Cotton. Sir Aston was full of *bonhommie;* he had more genius than his doggrel verses seem to imply. But he was as careless of his affairs as I have been.

Fitzh. I value his volume for his epigrams on almost all our principal neighbours, most of whom are now gone to their graves.

Cotton. His epigrams are utterly defective in sentiment; and, except in the Masque for Bretby, there is no tone of poetry; but in that poem there is a very fair spirit of the Muse.

Fitzh. He lived on good terms with most of the wits of the day, particularly the dramatists. I know not what is become of the volume, I rarely meet with it now; perhaps it is gone to the pastrycook's.

Cotton. It is too good for such a fate; but this French taste, introduced at the Restoration, has ruined us. I do not deny the French

esprit; but they have little sentiment, and no imagination.

Fitzh. Have you seen the grand epic of John Milton? I have not seen it, but do not think that I should like it.

Cotton. I have cast my eye upon it slightly. I am afraid I shall not like it:—it seems too stern for one.

Fitzh. I understand the language is hard, and Latinized. I am, like you, fond of the colloquial, and easy.

Cotton. I believe there are fine things in it: but I do not wish to hear too much of satan; one has seen too many of his wiles in the common affairs of life.

Fitzh. I hear he is blind; and now living obscurely, if not in absolute poverty.

Cotton. Why, considering the distinguished political part he took in Cromwell's time, we

can scarcely expect that he can be much noticed by the great of the present day.

Fitzh. These great are very little in every thing but the rank and decorations of a profligate court. It is astonishing to me, that adversity had not taught them a better lesson.

Cotton. Adversity sometimes softens and enlightens; but it as often hardens. Our royal master has no heart: nature denied him that, and there is no substitute for it. The companions that surround him are almost necessarily congenial to his own humours. Those Buckinghams, father and son, have contributed deeply to the ruin of all the three Stuarts.

Fitzh. How frightfully they have used Clarendon, who has done so much, and suffered so much for them.

Cotton. My father was always talking of Clarendon's character as a young man: he said

he was too grave even for the court of the father: how could he be fitted for the dissolute court of the son? He was ambitious:—a little vain, and a little too sanguine.

Fitzh. Whom worthy of respect, has the court not used ill? How malignantly they enjoyed to raise the jealousy of poor Sir John Denham with his young wife, till they literally drove the poet to madness!

Cotton. How could he have the folly to marry a beautiful woman young enough to be his daughter, and then bring her to such a court!

Fitzh. (Smiling.) Poets, friend Charles, will often do foolish things:—you yourself have been guilty of a few follies.

Cotton. As many as the day is long! All my life has been but a succession of follies! But then I always repent of what I do wrong; yet sin again the next day. I am only good

and only happy in the untempting solitude of the country, with my books, or my fishing rod, or my rural sports.

Fitzh. Do you remember old Hastings of Woodlands?

Cotton. I once saw him in the New Forest when I was almost a boy. I never shall forget his figure; nor the odd blithness of his manner; he was then verging towards his 100th year. He had a sort of bluff way, in which there was mixed a good deal of haughtiness. He never forgot that he was the son and brother of an ancient earl, and that the blood of Clarence flowed in his veins: indeed the estates on which he lived and sported, came principally from the old Countess of Salisbury, of the house of Pole. His old-fashioned house was the most curious abode of an ancient sportsman I ever saw; and the forest round him was the noblest domain

for his sports. His horses, his dogs, his hawks, were all noble animals. He had a little army of keepers, all dressed in one uniform of green; and his house abounded with plenty by the mere supply of game. He knew all the wiles of the chase so well, and rode fine horses so well, that long after eighty he could keep up with the fleetest hounds. In the evening, over the fire of his great parlour chimney, he could relate all the adventures of the day with admirable humour. I cannot say that he was very intellectual, but long practice had furnished him with so many observations on the appearances of nature, and the characters of animals, and especially all that concerns the chase, that he was always amusing. Then his high birth, and the company of his boyhood, and early youth, had supplied him with so many traditional anecdotes of the courts of Queen Elizabeth and James, that my father

told me no one was ever tired of listening to him. But he was sharp, and self-willed, and a little inclined to be insolent, and never very strict in his morals. He was the most perfect specimen of rural squires, who pass their whole time in country sports, because his birth dignified them, and his domains gave the best range for them.

Fitzh. I believe he died some years before the Restoration. Was it not about 1650?

Cotton. Yes: I was then twenty years old. He had a son, an aged man, who was knighted, but did not long outlive him.

Fitzh. Nothing delights me more than to listen to discriminative representations of men of peculiar character. The varieties in the intellectual and rural character of mankind are inexhaustible. The ingredients of nature are differently proportioned, and accidental circumstances give different directions to them.

Cotton. Almost all our happiness depends on self-complaisance, and content; and all our health, upon living as much as possible in the open air.

Fitzh. But you must add to it mental occupation.

Cotton. Mental occupation, which is not too severe, and of that sort which promotes cheerfulness of spirits. I would promote the comic rather than the grave.

Fitzh. Yet, though most of your poetry, as well as your other compositions, is of the familiar, you have some exquisite passages of grave and tender sentiments.

Cotton. Now and then a soft melancholy overcomes me; but from the mournful temperament into which I saw my father fall, on account of his misfortunes, I have always made a vow with myself, to be as merry as I can.

Fitzh. You laugh sometimes when your heart is writhing with pain.

Cotton. I do; and I confess the effort sometimes costs more than it is worth; for afterwards I relapse the deeper into my pangs. But grave poetry increases my sensitiveness,—and my circumstances will not allow me to be sensitive.

Fitzh. Are you an admirer of Waller?

Cotton. I think him too artificial; and there is a frivolity in his mind, as well as in his heart: but he has been a great polisher of our language and of the harmony of our versification.

Fitzh. His pusillanimity has greatly affected his reputation and his influence over the public. But he shewed literary courage in breaking away from the absurdities and bad taste of the metaphysical school; and there is great

elegance in many of the turns of his thoughts as well as expressions.

Cotton. He has not the vigour of Cowley, but he generally avoids his far-fetched and metaphysical wit. But he is only plausible where Cowley is sound, deep and true. I could sooner be a hewer of wood and drawer of water, than to wear my time in pruning and polishing as Waller has done.

Fitzh. But you are often rather too careless.

Cotton. How can I be otherwise? perhaps a bailiff is at my heels.

Fitzh. What would you most avoid, if you were to pass life over again?

Cotton. Debt! Nothing humiliates us and destroys our peace of mind so much.

Fitzh. Why then not abstain from it?

Cotton. He who is once entangled can scarcely ever get free. It is like a fish upon a

barbed hook; and we are lured into it as they are, by false baits.

Fitzh. They who give credit by the use of such baits, and on the faith of such hooks, are the worst of mankind.

Cotton. I shall of course agree in this; and I can testify it by experience. Every pound in one way or other costs us five or ten.

Fitzh. Life is a lottery, and he who draws a bad card can scarcely avoid mischances. Your life has been at least a chequered one.

Cotton. Most of the checks have been black.

Fitzh. Time has now stolen away a great part of our years, and perhaps the evening of our days may set without clouds.

Cotton. Yours may, and I daresay will, for you have always led a tranquil and prudent life. My mind presages for me little but evil. I will still endeavour to wear smiles; but my

heart, if I can look into the future, will, I fear, still be buried in gloom.

Fitzh. Age, as it dwindles down our energies, also softens our indiscretions. If you are less mirthful and volatile, you will be more at peace. Encourage a little more the native tenderness of your heart and simplicity of your taste. Set your house in order and trim your garden; study again your friend Cowley's prose essays, and put into execution all the directions of Evelyn's Sylva; do not seek gay company in London, nor ever sacrifice a friend to a joke,—jokes often begin in good-nature, but end in heartlessness. Exchange some of your lighter literature for those grave works which now become your age. You have above most men the qualities within you which are the most essential ingredients of a simple and virtuous happiness.

Cotton. This is something like preaching,

and you know that I have a mortal hatred to preaching.—But I pledge you to another glass, and may it be as you advise! *(A tear started down Cotton's cheek as he spoke.)*

Fitzh. We have known each other too long to allow you to be angry,—and I see you are too good to be angry: but the night is coming on, and we must part.

Cotton. Good night, then! The dews are coming on fast, and I will not detain you;—but be careful how you open the door, the myrmidons are abroad.

They parted. Alas! Cotton soon went to London, and there he died 1687, amid the misery of attorneys and bailiffs.

THOMAS GRAY, THE POET.

Gray's childhood was a childhood of misery. His father used his mother with relentless cruelties; extorted her property, spent her separate gains, and left her with slender means to provide for the support and education of this her only child. He was a scrivener; a sullen, speculating, imprudent man: she, who was an Antrobus, carried on a separate china trade: her brother was a tutor at Eton, and a learned man. He had a cousin, an Alderman Gray, a grocer, at Canterbury, whom Gray sometimes visited.

At Eton, Gray formed his intimacy with Horace Walpole, and when Sir Robert Walpole sent this favourite son on his travels, Gray was chosen to accompany him. Gray, partly from native turn of mind, and partly from the sufferings of his childhood, was of a most grave and melancholy cast; timid, reserved, delicate, and fastidious; an exquisite classical scholar, and skilled in all the arts. Walpole was the spoiled child of fortune; gay, volatile, ingenious, witty, accomplished, as fond of the arts as Gray, but less sure in his taste; vain, conceited, rich in anecdote, curious in history, researchful in little things rather than in great, delighted with gems and frivolities, and artificial in all he said, did, and liked.

Walpole. Well, we approach this famed Florence! how my heart beats to see all its curiosities.

Gray. Do not expect too much.

Walpole. Do not be so cold and chilling.

Gray. You are apt to run away with your expectations, and then grow peevish and splenetic when you are disappointed.

Walpole. It is better to hope too much, than to fear too much. No flower would ever bloom and open under you: you would nip it in the bud, like a frosty morning.

Gray. Because you have basked in sunshine, you wonder that every one else has not your warmth.

Walpole. You are as fretful as a sour cat; I wish you would be a little more companionable.

Gray. You would be more pleasing, if you would be a little less talkative.

Walpole. And it would become your age to be a little less of a philosopher.

Gray. We must all be content with what

nature has made us, and not affect another character. *Naturam expellas,* &c. which I need not repeat.

Walpole. I believe that much more may be done by art than you suppose. Are not the manners of rank and fashion made by art? I suppose that is something?

Gray. Yes, something;—but you place too much upon it.

Walpole. That is the jealousy of——

Gray (frowning.) What?

Walpole. Oh, I do not know what I was going to say—I believe I meant to say, of a man who has been as much addicted to the solitude of books as you have been.

Gray. Aristocracy is a very good thing; but it must keep within bounds, and know its own limits.

Walpole. My dear Gray, we shall not quar-

rel about that. I believe you have much more pride than I have.

Gray (smiling a little contemptuously.) We must define pride before we settle that question.

Walpole. You are always for your definitions, and your precisions. Now I have done: I was not born for these things.

Gray. How can we decide, unless we affix the same meaning to words? We may otherwise argue for ever, without coming nearer to the point.

Walpole. I perceive we had better not argue this point at all.

Gray. As you please; no one is less disposed to argue than I am.

Walpole (in a tone of flattery.) The more's the pity;—no one *can* argue so well as you can!

Gray. I make no pretence to it; I have not spirits for it; and I despise sophistries.

Walpole. I confess I love a bon-mot as well as——

Gray (smiling, and interrupting him.) As well as the truth; do you not?

Walpole. I am afraid I do:—it is the fashion of good society, you know.

Gray. I know nothing about good society, if by good society you mean rank, title, fashion, and wealth.

Walpole. You are an excellent man, and a wise man; but you would do better, if you would come a little more out of your books.

Gray. I am content with them; they are my best comfort.

Walpole. I love books too; but I love to mix them with the world.

Gray. I do not use books for ornament, but for use. I search them only so far as they are the vehicles of truth.

Walpole. But, unfortunately, such books are often unamusing.

Gray. We do not live only for amusement; we have higher tasks to perform.

Walpole. There you are again, with your grave saws. Let us "frolic while 'tis May."

Gray. We are not butterflies: we have to provide for the winter as well as the summer, and must live in the dark tempest as well as in the sunshine.

Walpole. Well, well, Gray: the sun shines now, and I catch a glimpse at this moment of Florence itself before us! There, at least, we shall be gay.

Gray. You may be gay; I shall be left alone in my lodging, and I had rather be so; I wish to remain undisturbed.

Walpole. I wish you would be a little less sullen:—why keep all your knowledge to yourself?

Gray. Fortune has placed you in a joyous and enviable situation, and you are apt to forget that few others are blessed in the same way.

Walpole. If I am so placed, it is not for nothing: my father's services have won it.

Gray. I do not deny it: I admit that your aristocratical position is legitimate:—but do not misuse it.

Walpole. Do not be severe:—your temper is rather sour.

Gray. If it is, you know not what causes I may have for it: do not indulge an inebriety which forgets the feelings of others.

Walpole. I shall be impatient to present my letters to my old friend, Sir Horace Mann.

Gray. I shall not go with you.

Walpole. Why not?—But do as you please.

Gray. I have a thousand reasons: the reluctance of my feelings to such introductions is alone sufficient.

Walpole. We come here to see life and manners, and you want to shut yourself up with your books and thoughts.

Gray. You never consider any situation, or any objects but your own. I do not argue against *your* spending as much time in the society and amusements as you wish; but allow me to indulge my own taste, and my own *whims,* if you choose to call them so.

Walpole. My dear Gray, you are just fitted to be the author of Matthew Green's poem *Upon the Spleen.*

Gray. And a very good poem it is:—I wish I was the author of it.

Walpole. But you can write much better verse yourself. I do not dislike the melancholy of your poetry, but I would not have it in your manners.

Gray. Then you would have me put on a character. That does not suit *me.*

Walpole. I remember we said of you at school, that you never could be a boy. I would be a boy all my life.

Gray. You have reason for the gaiety of boyhood; I have not.

Walpole. Forget your English sorrows; we are now in Italy.

Gray. I would not forget them; they are sacred.

Walpole. Do not be sentimental, except when you are writing verses; there you may indulge as much in this mood as you will.

Gray. I do not blame your liveliness; but I cannot imitate it.

Walpole. How could two such opposite tempers ever be such friends as we are?

Gray. You sought me; not I you. I never sought any one. I was too obscure to venture to seek any one; and the only mode I have

had to preserve my self-complaisance, has been to retire.

Walpole. I have always known the pride of your character; and it has been a noble pride.

Gray. The only just pride is not to go out of one's character, nor to make oneself ridiculous by pretending to what does not belong to one.

Walpole. In my whole life I never met with any one so fearful of incurring ridicule as you.

Gray. I own it: it is almost a disease with me.

Walpole. You certainly carry it too far: you want courage: and it would serve your genius more if you dared more.

Gray. I do not pretend to genius; I am more fearful of censure, than hopeful of approbation.

Walpole. I never could understand what it

is you fear. Your scholarship and taste were universally acknowledged at school; and there was an original force of thought and imagery in all you wrote, which struck every one who was a judge of composition.

Gray. I do not deserve your praise: my productions cost me great labour, and comparing them with my models, I never could satisfy myself.

Walpole. There was a great defect; you paid too much idolatry to models; you would not trust yourself as you ought to have done.

Gray. My uncle Antrobus impressed upon me from a child, that any departure from the classical models must be faults; and I loved my mother's blood so much, that I could not but obey its dictates.

Walpole. This was carrying your filial gratitude a little too far; but I remember Antro-

bus, and acknowledge that he had a very elegant and accomplished mind.

Gray. If you knew what reason I have had to love my mother, you would not wonder at my submissive idolatry.

Walpole. But still you know, Gray, that scholarship and genius are very different qualifications.

Gray. Originality of thought is necessary; I refer to the manner of expressing it.

Walpole. Surely the classical ancients cannot have monopolised every variety of excellence in form and style.

Gray. Perhaps not; but it is dangerous to flatter oneself one can improve upon them.

Walpole. I intreat you to emancipate yourself from this servility. You have at the bottom a daring and firey mind, though it is covered over with a load of wet ashes.

Gray. I wish I deserved the compliment you pay me; I am sure that I do not.

Walpole. You are the most hypochondriacal and low-spirited young man I have ever met with: but my father was right in thinking that your gravity would be of service to my levity.

Gray. My gravity rather, it seems, offends you.

Walpole. You know I was a spoiled child, and you must forgive my sallies.

Gray. If you do not carry them too far: you well know how morbid I am.

Walpole. I wish you were not. Shake it off: throw but a stone, and as Matthew Green says, it will fly.

Gray. Gay, careless hearts like yours, with the command of every pleasure and distinction may talk so.

"Slow rises worth, by poverty depressed,"

says the surly Johnson: and he says these things well.

Walpole. I do not like his declamatory style.

Gray. It is well suited to an imitator of Juvenal.

Walpole. I like the terse, the pointed, and the humorous.

Gray. But we must take every thing in its own way: this would not do for Juvenal.

Walpole. I hear that Johnson is a vulgar, over-bearing pedant; a mere bear!

Gray. Perhaps so. I suspect that he is not a true and very elegant scholar; but I must confess, that he is a man of a strong mind, though often too pompous.

Walpole. I abhor a rude pedant who does not conform to the manners of the world.

Gray. I dislike rudeness and pedantry, as much as you do:—though I am not a fine gentleman like you.

Walpole. Did you ever meet Walter Harte? He told me some curious stories of Johnson: —his is a ragged and miserable poverty!

Gray. That is a disgrace to the age. He is a man of genius and learning, and ought not to be neglected.

Walpole. My dear Gray, if men will not make themselves decent and agreeable in their appearance, all genius and learning goes for nothing with me.

Gray. There again you carry the matter too far: you make no allowances for the mischances of human lots.

Walpole. Well, my moral philosopher,—have the thing your own way if you will: I should like to see you set at table with Johnson:—how you would turn up your nose.

Gray. That is a different affair:—I am not bound to make him my companion.

Walpole. My dear Gray, I know no one more fastidious than you are.

Gray. It may be so: I am afraid that I am a little faulty that way.

Walpole. I could endure many coarsenesses which you would not.

Gray. Your rank enables you to take many liberties I dare not.

By this time the travellers approached the suburbs of Florence. The next day Walpole waited on Sir Horace Mann, and came back overwhelmed with delight, hope, and vanity.

His levity and boisterousness overcame the weak spirits of Gray. They passed many months there with daily bickerings, and mutual discontent with each other. But still Gray could employ himself in admiration of the paintings, and of the rich display of all

the arts. When Walpole returned from his gay assemblies, he offended his melancholy and lonely friend by his self-elation. When the poet was, however grave, contented with his own thoughts, Walpole broke in upon him with his lively boasts and humorous but heartless relations. The poet was willing to cry out,

"Leave, O leave me to repose!"

His discontent, and the darkness of his future prospects then grew upon him, and preyed upon his mind.

Walpole in the exuberance of his flattering enjoyments, now began to consider Gray a damp and a clog upon him. "He receives one," he said, "always with a fastidious and repressive coldness;—and when I come home to our lodgings to relate my pleasures, he sneers and snaps! Because he cannot enjoy those things, am I to be debarred from them?

Thus it is that too much learning disqualifies us for the world.—I have always said so; after all, I might have chosen a much better companion !"

Gray, on the other hand, now began doubly to suspect the goodness of Walpole's heart. He had embarked in these travels, ill-suited to his own finances, on the confidence of Walpole's friendship and good behaviour. It was ungenerous thus to treat him, when he might suppose him to be in some degree in his power. In these days men did not travel with the same ease as they do now: and if Gray separated from his companion, he would have to make his way home with difficulty. However, he was resolved to separate at any rate:—and he did so.

In his way home he left his famous Achaic Ode at the Grande Chartreuse, which shews the deep moral melancholy that then brooded

over him. Nothing met him but sorrows at home; his friend Richard West was already dead; his father had spent every thing, and he was without fortune, and without a profession. The state of mind these circumstances produced, gave occasion to all his best poems; his Elegy, his Ode to Spring, his Hymn to Adversity, and his prospect of Eton College. Grief was the muse who truly inspired him: when he afterwards studied to write, he became artificial, abrupt, and glittering.

He now retired to the quiet of an academic life, and took up his residence at his old college of Peter House, Cambridge, when he gave himself up to books with no other purpose than to while away his time.

Hence he occasionally paid visits to his mother and aunt, who had retired to Stoke, in Buckinghamshire, where the scene of his *Long Story* is laid.

After some years the quarrel with Walpole was outwardly made up: but I believe the inward wound was never perfectly healed. Walpole having set up a private press, was glad to enrich it with some of Gray's fine poetry: and he it was who first introduced the noble Elegy to the notice of the world.

Walpole. I must honour my press with your exquisite poem.

Gray. I have a dread of appearing before the public:—for heaven's sake do not so outrage my feelings!

Walpole. My dear friend, you mistake; the poem has already circulated in MS. and every one is enmarvelled!

Gray. Excuse me for saying you have gone beyond your authority; I shewed the thing to you, because we have been accustomed to exchange our scribblings from our school-days. I did not mean that you should communicate it to others.

Walpole. This is false modesty:—when every one praises, what can you fear?

Gray. When things are shewn in MS. as a favour, the reader is flattered, and therefore resolved to be pleased. The public will receive in a different spirit what is open to all.

Walpole. I always told you that you were "hiding your talent," which Milton pronounces in one of your favourite sonnets, to be contrary to duty.

Gray. If my talent was like Milton's, it would indeed be so;—but I never shall be guilty of any such mad presumption.

Walpole. You estimate Milton too high; and yourself too low. Milton ought to have written a little more familiarly, and more in language of the world. I am not very fond of Satan and his exploits:—he is too high a devil for me.

Gray. I will not dispute with you about

matters of taste, but the grandeur of Milton's conception and delineation of this character is to me inexpressibly stupendous.

Walpole. But I want more of human interest;—more of the affairs of the world in an advanced state of civil society.

Gray. I do not wonder at this:—you have been cradled in state-affairs; and all that your ears have heard from your days of first intelligence has regarded political society.

Walpole. Do not sneer, Gray! I perceive your sly look!

Gray. Indeed you mistake me. Early impressions are a second nature.

Walpole. How came you then to have such a predilection for Satan? Were your early impressions concerning *him?*

Gray. (Smiling.) I will not answer that; perhaps they were.

Walpole. What figure do you think Eve

would have in the court of George II. at a drawing room of Queen Caroline?

Gray. You are right to turn these things to a joke, for I believe I am apt to be too serious.

Walpole. To tell you the truth, I prefer the Rape of the Lock to the Paradise Lost. Lord Chesterfield says, that he is obliged to take snuff when he reads this divine poem.

Gray. Lord Chesterfield may be a great wit, but he is a very little poet.

Walpole. If you would come a little more into the world, Gray, you would better know the value of this wit.

Gray. I am content to be the obscure creature that I am: and do not seek to destroy this spell of my pleasures.

Walpole. I would only seek to correct your spleen, and bring you out into the sphere where you ought to shine.

Gray. You know that I am unfitted to shine

there if I was willing and able to find entry. If I had been born the son of a prime minister of great power, as you were, yet with the disposition which nature has implanted in me, I could not have enjoyed a court, or been fitted for it.

Walpole. I thought you said habit was a second nature.

Gray. So it is, under certain limits; but it cannot produce positive contraries.

Walpole. I have no fancy for what is abstract, or purely spiritual: we are human mortals, and every thing, to interest me, must partake of the conventions of society.

Gray. You have referred to Milton's noble sonnet, I must refer to it also. The poet reminds us that our tasks and duties in life are various: and that each deserves equally well of the Deity by well performing his own allotted function. It is destined only to a few to execute abstract and spiritual services.

Walpole. If we wander far away from facts, we shall soon be lost in misty labyrinths.

Gray. There are gold-tinged vapours, as well as these, which are dark and unpierceable.

Walpole. I am all for light, and would have a lamp if I cannot get the sun.

Gray. Is there no light in solitude?

Walpole. It is the collision of human wit which strikes light.

Gray. And brings out smoke and darkness too.

Walpole. Well, Gray, you shall write elegies in church-yards, in which you are admirable, and I will have my bon mots.

Gray. I disturb no man's hobbies:—let me have my own.

Walpole. You shall be the weeping philosopher, and I will be the laughing one.

Gray. You have reason to laugh:—I have not.

Walpole. Yours is,

> " Wisdom in sable garb array'd,
> With leaden eye, that loves the ground."

Gray. You have not yet forgotten the levity of your spirits, so I am sure that the world still goes well with you; and why should it not? No banners of mourning hang over Strawberry Hill.

Walpole. Gray, I love the splendour of your expressions, and the pictured imagery which emblazons your poetry. I wish I had more of it to decorate my little baby-castle.

Gray. You have shewn your taste and genius in that castle; I wish it had been a little larger, and more massive: but I am aware of the circumstances under which it gradually grew into its present form.

Walpole. If stupid censurers were as candid as you, they would not try me by rules, which my design did not admit.

Gray. We shall both have the same measure from the public: my poetry will be tried by inapplicable canons, and purposes I never dreamed of. The popular head is a capricious animal with an hundred faces, which I have no desire to encounter.

Walpole. I am used to the beast:—how did my father, Sir Robert, stand it?

Gray. Your father was a great and steady minister in dangerous times, when the title to the throne was often called in question, not only by fierce factions at home, but by the most powerful foreign states.

Walpole. Yes; there were more dangers than the world ever knew.

Gray. I can praise without flattery there.

Walpole. And I may glory without vanity.

Gray. You have yourself wisely chosen a more tranquil and easy and secure path. You have had a right to repose under your father's

laurels; and you have adorned it with an historical taste in the arts, which has become your situation.

Walpole. This is noble praise, which warms my heart.

Gray. You know my manner: you perceive that it is said with sincerity.

Walpole. I do: give me both your hands: my father is my idol, and I shall not forget this approbation from *you!*

Gray. My testimony gives no value to it; it is the testimony which receives its stamp from truth.

Walpole. But it is the testimony of an inquiring, profound, and honest mind, of the greatest talent, and the greatest intelligence.

Gray. I am but a theorist; but on such subjects I think that theorists may, when they become history, form a sure opinion.

Walpole. In speculation your judgment

never errs. You join the purest morality to a deep insight into the characters of mankind; and as all history is at your command, you illustrate one age by comparison with another most distant from it.

Gray. I have nothing but my leisure, my memory, and my freedom from the broils of the world, to assist me.

Walpole. You never can be persuaded to think highly enough of yourself.

Gray. I know my own weaknesses and incapacities; and what one does not feel that one deserves,

"Plays round the head, but comes not to the heart,"

according to a happy line of my friend Mason.

Walpole. The poetry of your friend Mason wants your strength and nerve.

Gray. He is much more easy and fluent than I am.

Walpole. You are too indulgent to him;

and he has a light vanity, which requires to be checked.

Gray. You do not know the simple goodness of his heart: he has the simplicity of a child.

Walpole. And the baby vanity too.

Gray. There are noble things both in the Elfrida and Caractacus.

Walpole. No; he apes you, but does not succeed.

Gray. It is a strain of his own.

Walpole. I do not like his lyric raptures; they are affected.

Gray. Rely upon it, you do him injustice.

Walpole. I have never been able to comprehend how you could pursue your studies month after month, and year after year, with so little recreation or change of scenery, conversation, and persons. At the end of a fortnight I should have been so weary and disgusted, that

I should have thrown my books into the fire.

Gray. Because you have been always used to gaiety and movement. I am commonly low-spirited; but I believe that I should have been so in any situation.

Walpole. You say that you read for your own amusement and improvement;

At quid scire valet, nisi te scire hoc sciat alter.

Gray. This is a wrong and vain axiom. The first pleasure of mental improvement or mental power is the satisfaction of self-consciousness.

Thus Gray went on to the last in his college retirement; he read much, reflected much, and wrote little. It is much to be regretted that he did not write more. His powers would have still increased, and his mind would have been more easy by finding a vent. Vapours

gathered round his heart; and the extreme tenderness of his disposition had no outlet. He lived at Cambridge, little distinguished, and little noticed; his acquaintance were few; and the mathematical studies of the place extinguished all taste and respect for poetry and works of imaginative genius. While Sir Conyers Middleton lived, he found at his house more congenial conversation, and he deeply felt his loss, and lamented his death. Cole, the antiquary, was another of his acquaintance, and collected by his indefatigable curiosity innumerable curious notices; but he often displeased by his idle gossip, and was utterly deficient in taste and refinement. His prurient love of scandal offended Gray's delicacy, who expressed his fastidiousness in a way that sometimes created ill blood.

Gray found his summer-tours of great service to his health and spirits; and as his observance

and admiration of all the varying appearances of nature was in the highest degree acute and accurate, and the language in which he noted them vivid, and picturesque, this was the principal enjoyment and happiest effort of his latter days.

He had a sympathy for a peasant's life, which discovers itself from the earliest specimens of his genius. It forms, above all others, the most exquisite of all the exquisite imagery of the Elegy. Horace in his Epodes, and Claudian in his Old Man of Verona, have touched on some of the same circumstances; but they have not Gray's solemnity or moral pathos. I know not what there is of spell in the following simple line,

"The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep,"

but no frequency of repetition can exhaust its touching charm. This fine poem overcame

even the spiteful enmity of Johnson, and forced him to acknowledge its excellence.

The poet never possessed the same noble and uninterrupted flow again. I have no doubt that his sorrow for the death of West, and the misfortunes which met him on his return to England, had worked him up to that temperament at the time of its design and execution, and that he had no view to publication at the moment, but only to open the fountains of his own swelling bosom.

The view of the lakes of Westmoreland and Cumberland seems to have filled him with a grave and melancholy rapture. In the simple auberges which received him, with what delight he reflected on the images of the past day, and with what a thrill of mind and heart he made his short and magical notes. A solitary life amid the grandeur of nature was most congenial to his pensive and sublime imagination

and wounded prospects. It is true that he might invest the peasantry with sentiments and thoughts and enjoyments which they never did know, though they might know; but it was a pleasing and virtuous delusion.

Thus he furnished his mind with food to live upon in his winter cloisters. The depressing ennui of the same dull form in the same dull costume and dull abode was thus relieved. His visions dwelt on more picturesque, more cheerful and more energetic objects; and he forgot the dull figures of unfeeling ignorance and indolence which croaked around him.

His friend Dr. Wharton,* of Old Park, near Durham, was his principal correspondent, to whom he laid open all his studies, thoughts, occupations and movements. His notices of

* The late Richard Wharton, Esq. M.P. for the city of Durham, and secretary to the Treasury, was his younger son. He was also a poet.

books are always curious, critical, instructive and sound. He often gives an entire and comprehensive character of a work in a sentence of a few words. His erudition was as accurate as it was full of taste and feeling. He wrote Latin poetry as nobly as he did English; and among the demi-classics none have excelled him. In the *Italorum Poemata Latine* there are none finer than his; and, in my opinion, he in this respect excelled not only Cowley but Milton.

His fault was, that he did not undertake any grand and continued poetical fiction. There can be little doubt, that he could have done it. But he submitted to the taste and practice of his age, when scarce any but short poems were produced. No epic was even attempted. The longest were didactic poems, but Gray was little inclined to approve of a long didactic poem without action. He did not even like

a poem of pure description, like Thomson's Seasons. His own ideas of excellence were so high, that he was not easily pleased, and he had an unaffected contempt for the greater part of cotemporary poetry. In this respect he was assuredly too fastidious. He had a slighting way of speaking of the candidates for poetical fame, which was not entirely to be approved; and he rather ungenerously spoke in this way of Collins. Old Dr. Wharton's recommendation of his friend Akenside would not reconcile Gray to his poem on Imagination; he thought it too diffuse, florid, and rhetorical, —and so it is. He spoke of Shenstone as hopping about his own gardens, incapable of going beyond them; and speaks of Thomson's Castle of Indolence, as having no more than a few good thoughts.

Altogether, it was not an age of strong, original, and inventive poetry. It had fallen

into the artifices of words, and personifications, and mechanical glitter. But so it is in every age; the secondaries and mediocrists, are always mechanical after some form or fashion, which prevails at the moment.

The character of Gray's mind was nerve and fire, but a nerve and fire which required great pressing before it came out.

Perhaps the fire burned more fiercely because it burned inwardly. Gray had the odd contradiction of a manly mind, and fastidious and somewhat effeminate manners. His imagination was all rural; but his birth and habits lay in a town. He never took up a rural sport; it does not seem as if he had ever been on horseback. He amused himself in the fields with flowers and plants, and butterflies and insects. His fancy supplied him with the habits of countrymen; the plough, the axe, the spade, the scythe and sickle, the vocations

of the shepherd and the herdsman. He loved to contemplate the snowy whirlwind, the April shower, the summer-morn, and the fading lights of evening, as the golden tints recede into twilight and darkness. His manner in society was that of *petit-maître;* his solitary thoughts were never frivolous. He was serious, benevolent, gentle, and conscientious. Perhaps he was too delicate for the rude tempers of the world; and he was like a tender plant, which could not bear the rough air, and tempests, and frosts. He died July, 1771, at the age of fifty-four.

It is sufficiently common for the public to pronounce rightly an individual to be a genius, without having any precise or exact ideas of what constitutes genius. There are many sorts of knowledge, which are not come at by technical processes, but by native sagacity. The perpetual recurrence to this subject is not

unimportant. It is desirable to know clearly the reasons of opinions so operative on life and manners. All humanity is more or less influenced by that mingled sort of mind, which, working in a higher degree, causes the production of poets. They are the mirrors by whom are reflected our nobler thoughts and sentiments. By their medium we see them with more distinctness, and have all their outlines, features, and associations pointed out. We look to poets for pictures of our feelings, for comments on man's passions and sympathies happily expressed, and for the display of all those images by which life is cheered and delighted.

The bosom which never knows a poetical feeling is barren, hard, and lifeless. If it apparently has no great vices, it can have no virtues. There is nothing intrinsic in the matter of our existence, or the matter surrounding us, to give us pleasure: all the charm

is conferred by the mind with which we contemplate it. This is the clue to the intense gratification which genuine poetry bestows. Poetry is thus the balm of our being; that which makes it, as Burns says,

"O'er all the ills of life victorious."

It is above condition, and fortune, and malice, and envy, and calumny, and intrigue, and treachery and plunder. Without some portion of sympathy with it, our sojourn here would be comfortless despair. When those flitting and shadowy charms have been embodied and realized, a great feat is done. Easy as it may seem, how little do we find of it in that which is daily put forth as poetry: which is formed of some unnatural association, some false thought, some meretricious glare. It is strange that so many writers miss the true images and feelings which are every moment impressing themselves upon us. Perhaps it arises from the false

theory of what are the purposes of poetry. Of no other part of literature are the mere human purposes so high: of none are the influences and effects so universal—so operative on our general nature. Particular parts of literature, particular departments of knowledge, may give accomplishment and use, but they cannot enter into the daily movements of our hearts, nor affect the essences of our universal being. We may pass our lives without interest in them. The topics which poetry ought to dwell upon, affect us every moment. These are not idle pretensions, or idle distinctions. But it may probably be asserted without exaggeration, that an erroneous opinion, the reverse of this, is generally spread, that the aim of poetry is to deal in idle and empty fancies; and to take us totally away from the feelings of nature and the sympathies of the mass of mankind:—to work by monsters, and improbabili-

ties, and impossibilities! This makes artificial manufacturers of nauseous verses, and half insane or foolish pretenders to inspiration: this brings the name into contempt, and gives a divine art the character of emptiness and nonsense.

But no one of sound sense and taste ever falls into this vulgar mistake; and the dull and the mean-hearted are glad to take advantage of it to cover their insensibility. What they thus traduce is not poetry; nor has a grain of poetry in it. It is as little what poets could write, as its author could write poetry. Gaudy words are easily put together, and extravagant images produced by forced combinations. But such inventions, if inventions they may be called, are loathsome. The deepest sagacity, the soundest judgment, the most accurate imagination, the most exquisite sensibility, are necessary to make a true poet. How can there

be a genuine imagination where there is no perfect knowledge of truth? How can the poet paint mankind to the life, if the imagination, whence he draws his lights, is inaccurate?

The simple description of the beautiful objects of life, which daily present themselves to us, and the notice of the ideas and movements of heart, which they naturally raise, may seem a very easy task, but the vanity of the performance, and the common want of facility in the execution, prove that it is not so. Authors resort to all artifices, to escape from it. What is related from mere observation, is of much less liveliness and brilliance. Observation must be mainly external; imagination identifies itself with the being represented, and all his feelings, ideas, and movements: one is a servile copy, the other is a counterpart of the object itself.

JOHN MILTON.

JOHN MILTON was the son of a scrivener, of a gentleman's family in Oxfordshire. He very early displayed his poetical genius, which his father rather ungenerously discouraged, as not a money getting occupation. But where nature gives imagination, who can bind down a poet's wings? or where she gives a tender and overflowing heart, united with an active and strong mind, who can check the outpouring of sentiment? Poetry is a fire not taken up or laid down at will. Milton could not bear the restraints of college discipline; his free and

soaring mind would not move in shackles. It seems as if he was early a stout and stern opposer of authority; but it is evident that he did not commence in the principles of a Puritan; for he was a great lover and frequenter of the theatres, and there is not a word in his juvenile poems which breathes puritanism. He became at last a resolute Republican; but was never a Puritan; his imagination alone would have saved him from that.

He became not only a great classical scholar, but from his first youth made himself master not only of all the beauties of Chaucer, Spenser, and Shakspeare, but with all the grandeur and richness of the Italian school. Dante was especially his greatest favourite. The sublime and sombre genius of Dante was most congenial to him.

His almost boyish ambition was to write some great epic poem. He first thought of

something relative to King Arthur and the fabulous parts of British history. But most of his early poems have a cast of phraseology and imagery drawn from the most picturesque and poetical passages of Shakspeare's dramas, rather than from any other predecessor. Yet his genius was not entirely dramatic;—he was not so versatile or so passionate as Shakspeare.

Masques were better suited to his genius than regular dramas; and these he was called on to put forth by the neighbourhood of his residence to the seat of Alice Spenser, Dowager Countess of Derby, at Harefield in Middlesex, for whom he wrote his *Arcades*, and this introduced him to the family of John Egerton, Earl of Bridgewater, who married the second daughter and co-heir of the countess, the eldest being married to Grey Brydges, Lord Chandos, and the youngest to the Earl of Huntingdon.

For the Earl of Bridgewater Milton wrote *Comus*, performed at Ludlow Castle, when the Earl was Lord President of Wales.

Lord Brackley. Mr. Milton, when will your masque be finished?

Milton. In a few days, my lord.

L. Brack. You shewed me a song, which is more delightful than I can tell you.

Milton. I owe it to our favourite Shakspeare if I have caught the right strain.

L. Brack. It is true that there is something of his manner; but there is also a manner of your own. I can always distinguish when his notes are floating upon your ear.

Milton. I know that you have studied our best poets with a congenial feeling.

L. Brack. My grandfather, Earl Ferdinando, was something of a poet.

Milton. He was a great, amiable, and accomplished peer.

L. Brack. Our names will be honoured by your muse; and if I divine not amiss, Ludlow Castle will have acquired a celebrity it has never yet attained.

Milton. It will be then by the generous state of the noble Earl your father, not by my humble efforts.

L. Brack. My father loves genius and literature, and we all love it; my grandmother taught us to love it; and we have never forgot your *Arcades* at Harefield.

Milton. My lord, you are a most noble scion of a noble and royal stock. But where is the Lady Alice, your sister; she surely will not shrink from taking her part.

L. Brack. I have made her promise that she will not; but she is very much frightened.

Milton. And your brother, Mr. Thomas Egerton?

L. Brack. O; *he* is quite ready. You have shewn him some of the poem that I have not yet seen;—at which he is in raptures.

Milton. Mr. Thomas Egerton is surprisingly well read; and has a memory which astonishes me: but he grows pale with study; and as his constitution is not strong, he ought to be more temperate with his books.

L. Brack. I tell him so; but he is so enthusiastic, and his imagination is so active, that I cannot controul him.

Milton. Study is delightful; but such a life ought not to end too early.

L. Brack. O here comes Alice. Are you prepared for your part, Alice?

Lady Alice Egerton. Brother, I would not disoblige you, nor Mr. Milton;—but I really have not courage for it.

L. Brack. You have given me your promise, Alice, and promises must not be broken.

Lady Alice. I shall forget my part;—I shall lose my speech, I shall faint.

Milton. Indeed, Lady Alice, it is not so difficult; and after the first few words you will be at your ease: and besides, since the other parts are taken by your ladyship's brothers, they will cheer you on.

L. Brack. It must be so, Alice.

Lady Alice. Well, brother, if you in your goodness command, I *must* obey.

Milton. Lady Alice, I have been mindful of the words I have put into your character; and they will not be unbecoming you.

Lady Alice. O no; Thomas says he has seen some beautiful speeches, and I know I shall be honoured by them; but I fear the strength of my nerves.

Mr. Thomas Egerton, entering. All well met together; where is the scenery of the Forest of Heywood?

L. Brack. Nearly ready: my father has got the best artists from London, and a messenger arrived this morning, saying the scenes are far on the road.

T. Egerton. We shall have a glorious exhibition; and this little Alice, who is so timid now, will delight us with her soft musical voice, like an angel.

Milton. Lady Alice will allow me to say, that she has indeed been the inspiring angel of my Comus.

Lady Alice. O what flatterers you poets always are!

Milton. Poets shall spring from your race, and the flame of the muse shall never die among you!

L. Brack. Really, my friend Milton, you are becoming very high-flown.

Milton. My lord, when I see nobility like

yours, with so many amiable and spiritual qualities arranged in feudal splendour, and dispersing it to make others happy, I worship aristocracy.

T. Egerton. But, my friend Milton, I have often heard you inveigh impatiently and angrily against the court.

Milton. I cannot bear the follies and dissoluteness of the court. From the commencement of the late reign, corruption burst into it in floods, and destroyed all respect for nobility, except for a few individuals. Thence I have been long entertaining suspicions and jealousies against those who are called the great. I foresee some great storm, which will overthrow the peace of the kingdom and end in blood.

T. Egerton. The present monarch is a good man. I do not defend his father.

Milton. His majesty may be so; but there

is something in him, in which I cannot place a confidence.

L. Brack. Poets should love the pomp of courts. What have you said in your beautiful *L'Allegro*?

Milton. I do not retract it: but all pleasure may be bought too dear. A virtuous court is a glorious sight!

L. Brack. That Buckingham did more than half the mischief. The king has many excellent qualities; but I myself see something about him which I do not like. I dread the queen's influence over him.

Milton. Yes; *there* is now the net which is working; there will be the entanglement. But I see other mischiefs also.

L. Brack. My father says the king has not a direct mind: he is wilful, but not firm.

Milton. Almost every thing is hollow and little there.

L. Brack. I am too young to have made many observations myself; I speak more from other's conversations.

Milton. I also speak much from rumour; for your lordship knows that my opportunities and habits have never led me within the circle of a court. But all who are intent upon great things must notice that there are stirring spirits abroad.

L. Brack. My father prophecies that mighty storms are brewing in the distant skies.

Milton. King James had wrong notions of an English monarchy; and his disposition was at once arbitrary and cowardly.

L. Brack. And his learning—

Milton. Was a childish and odious pedantry.

L. Brack. His silly kingcraft always defeated his own purposes.

Milton. The nation was divided into dangerous factions and sects at his accession; and

though the Papists were at first violently against him, he was rather inclined to favour them than the Puritans.

L. Brack. Charles has much better talents than his father, and a better heart, and more just feelings for the arts.

Milton. The king is advised to conciliate the popular party; but I can tell him that they will not be won: they have a great cause to carry, and they will carry it.

L. Brack. Wentworth is resolute, stern and strong.

Milton. He will drive matters too far; he is too hard, and has too much confidence in himself; and, moreover, no party has trust in him, for he has changed sides to gratify his own ambition.

L. Brack. O, my eloquent friend, how these things prove to me that books and contemplations in a virtuous retirement are our better

lot! There lie my wishes; there lies my passion.

Milton. My lord, your station and duties may call upon you for a more active life; books, and retirement, and the Muses are for humble men like me.

L. Brack. smiling. The fire of that eye, and the tone of your political opinions, do not bespeak retirement.

Milton. You suspect me of ambition for the troubled scenes of political life. My destiny is with the Muses; I have visions before me of great works;—but if the cause should call, I profess that I will not shrink from buckling on the sword.

L. Brack. You have studied the characters of the ancient republics: are you wedded to their theories?

Milton. Not entirely. There are many things in the history and manners of modern

Europe, which more delight my imagination; —the feudal system, the crusades, the courts of chivalry, the troubadours.

L. Brack. Those are delightful pictures to look back upon. I anticipated that these must be the sentiments of the enthusiastic lover of *The Fairy Queen.*

Milton. He is indeed a divine poet. May I not call him your relation?

L. Brack. My grandmother, as you know, was a Spenser, and they professed to each other to be connected in the bonds of relationship of blood; but I know not in what degree of kindred they stood to each other. My grandmother was very proud of the alliance; —and well she might be.

Milton. Nobly said, my young lord! it becomes your amiable and accomplished heart.

L. Brack. Poets are the gifted of heaven! I look upon you, Milton, above all nobility;

however splendid in birth, and powerful in possessions!

Milton. I have not words to make return for that high compliment; I will cherish it in my heart.

L. Brack. I have been always taught to venerate genius; and the turn of my own mind and disposition leads me to it.

Milton. Were other noble families like yours, and were the court made up of such families, I would throw off from me all republican notions.

L. Brack. There are great families at court.

Milton. I have studied the history and character of the court a little, even in my seclusion; and I have been rather curious in tracing memoirs of the peerage; but they who are now basking in the sunshine of the court, have, few of them, any lustre of descent, or personal qualities. The old and powerful nobles

keep aloof, as if fond of their independence, or disgusted with court frivolities. Where is Arundel, and Oxford, and Derby, and Huntingdon, and Lincoln, and Cumberland, and Abergavenny, and Northumberland and Essex, and the remainder of that class of the baronage?

L. Brack. The Stuarts have not had the art of conciliating our old nobility.

Milton. The throne has stood upon a moveable sand from the accession of King James.

L. Brack. If James had been a man of talent, he would still have had a difficult part to play.

Milton. Not if he had had talent, sagacity, and judgment. Elizabeth left the power of the crown in great vigour.

L. Brack. How then did James become so feeble?

Milton. He outraged the feelings and pre-

judices of the people in various ways; and then gave up through pusillanimity, what he endeavoured to extort through wilful tyranny.

L. Brack. He had some turn for poetry.

Milton. His poetry was execrable.

L. Brack. Poetry declined with the death of Queen Elizabeth.

Milton. Greatly. The high spirits of the nation were broken; and you know that all good poetry comes from high spirits.

L. Brack. Then you do not like metaphysical poetry.

Milton. It is not poetry. It may be invention; but it is an invention of discordances.

L. Brack. Yet there is sometimes ingenuity in it. It surprises us by the discovery and illustration of latent qualities, which we did not suspect.

Milton. It requires subtlety of mind, sharpness of thought, and an eccentric fancy.

L. Brack. Then what invention do you require?

Milton. The invention of high things, the exposition of sublime truths by imagined examples.

L. Brack. Then you would not have the story drawn from facts which have actually happened; and characters which have actually occurred.

Milton. That is history, not poetry.

L. Brack. A very clear distinction, I admit.

Milton. Poetry teaches by embodiment of abstract ideas.

L. Brack. But is not history more sure, because it teaches from experience.

Milton. Much less so; for characters drawn from history, and comments upon events are guess-work.

L. Brack. How so?

Milton. We can only guess at men's motives,

and often know only partial facts. But a poet knows all the inward souls of his invented characters; and the whole compass and particulars and colourings of the facts he feigns.

L. Brack. Thus you have studied philosophically the depths and ends of your divine art.

Milton. My father was very unwilling that I should give myself up to poetry; though he himself was devoted to the sister art of music. I endeavoured to reason with him and persuade him to allow me to pursue my bent by a Latin poem which you have seen.

L. Brack. Did it convince him, or soften his prejudices?

Milton. Not entirely. Age is apt to be dogmatical.

L. Brack. What was his chief objection?

Milton. He wanted me to addict myself to pursuits which brought more substantial rewards.

L. Brack. It is but too true, that poetry is little encouraged.

Milton. It would be nothing, were it not its own reward.

L. Brack. But in this material world we cannot live entirely upon spirit.

Milton. It requires great magnanimity to endure privation, and run the chances of necessary support.

L. Brack. Is poetry inconsistent with the occupations of a gainful profession?

Milton. I think it is.

L. Brack. It always appears to me that no study so brings out the highest of our intellectual powers and emotions as poetry.

Milton. It is by the force of imagination that our noblest feelings are generated, and it is in the ideal world that we must find grandeur, beauty, tenderness, refinement, and pure virtue.

L Brack. I never considered poetry a play of words, and glitter of metaphors and similes, as some pretend.

Milton. No, these are the petitesses of the art.

L. Brack. I have thought that Providence designed us to imagine something mightier than our eyes could see, or our ears could hear.

Milton. Hence from poets alone can we learn our best attributes, and most spiritual qualities.

L. Brack. But this is only true of the first order of poets.

Milton. No: the rest are triflers: *vox et prœterea nihil!*

L. Brack. Have we any great poet between Chaucer and Spenser?

Milton. Lord Buckhurst would have been a great poet, if he had not turned statesman.

L. Brack. But what think you of Gower and Lydgate?

Milton. They are versifiers;—no poets; especially the former.

L. Brack. And Lord Surrey?

Milton. He had something of a tender vein of lyric poetry about him, and was a most accomplished hero of chivalry; but what he has written is not of sufficient importance and weight to deserve consideration.

L. Brack. The reign of Queen Elizabeth produced numerous writers of verses.

Milton. Scarcely one of them rose to the true strain of poetry, except our immortal Spenser.

L. Brack. What not the writers of pastoral songs?

Milton. Yes, in that way there was a charm in Nicholas Breton, Dr. Lodge, Kit Marlowe, and Sir Walter Raleigh.

L. Brack. But you have forgot Daniell, and Drayton, and Chapman.

Milton. All have fine passages, and Daniell had a noble, moral vein; but still they want the grand fiction, which is essential to give the character of true poetry.

L. Brack. You, of course, are not speaking of dramatic poetry?

Milton. In that department Shakspeare ascended to a height which no other had reached, nor ever will.

L. Brack. And the Italian poets?

Milton. I almost prefer Dante and Petrarch to my favourite classics.

L. Brack. But you do not name Tasso, of whom your friend Manso told you so much.

Milton. I reserve that for the relation of my Travels; it forms a main feature in them.

L. Brack. I see that you have no more time to spare for my troublesome questions.

Milton. My dear lord, you honour me by your kindness and attention to my opinions, as well as by the outbursts of your accomplished and most amiable and courteous young mind: but there is a part of *Comus* which I wish to fill up, and you know that we have very little time to spare.

L. Brack. Hasten to that divine poem, on which our names will hereafter live!

The conversation thus ends with Tasso, and Milton's travels to Italy, and of which I ought to have given an account before I recorded this conversation. On the day preceding the dawn on which I wrote this, I had spent the morning on that sacred and most romantic bank, broken and precipitous, and shaded by old trees, and covered with tangled brushwood, overhanging the Alps' side of the lake of Geneva, where Milton visited his friend *Diodati*

in the course of these travels, and spent the morning in the house where Byron wrote part of the third canto of Childe Harold, and where his friend Shelley then took up his abode. It is a most glorious and poetical position.

Milton's Italian travels tended greatly to enrich his mind—as they did that of Gray. His acquaintance and friendship with Manso, who had been intimate with Tasso, was a fortunate event for him. The conversation, which continually turned on that great poet, added to the flame of Milton's love for the Muse. The pictures of Tasso's eccentric mind and hard fate, still increase our interest in the fruits of his poetical genius. I have seen the vault of Ferrara, in which they relate that he was confined for many years—it is not fit for a dog!

Some commentators or biographers contend, that Tasso's madness was feigned. This seems

to me a most absurd and far-fetched supposition, when we consider the inexpressible miseries of incarceration which this alleged insanity brought upon him. There are scarce any stories in poetical biography so affecting as that of Tasso. His life—and indeed that is the case with most great poets—was even more poetical than his writings.

Milton's Latin epistles to Diodati shew us many of his early sentiments, opinions, and habits. Johnson brutally taunts Milton with having hastened home from Italy on pretence of the brooding commotions of his own country, and then shutting himself up as a schoolmaster, or tutor, with a few pupils. Johnson of all men ought not to have forgot the calls of pecuniary necessity; and as it was Milton's province to work by his mind, not by his hand, or his sword, why should he not in that situation have performed an influential part in poli-

tical concerns? Johnson's life of Milton is, throughout written in a bad, malignant, and even vulgar spirit. The language is sometimes coarse, and the humour pedantic and gross. The criticism on the Paradise Lost is powerful and grand: the criticism on the other poems is mean, false, and execrable.

Johnson had no taste: when he decided right, it was from the force of his judgment vigorously, painfully, and conscientiously exerted. To the grandeur of natural scenery he was insensible;—to picturesque imagery he was insensible; to tender and passionate sentiment he was insensible; how could he feel poetry? It was most unfortunate for the memory of our English poets, that their biography should fall under the dominion of so harsh a mind.

As to the political part which Milton in his middle age took in the civil wars, he is of

course praised by one side, and censured and calumniated by the other. Johnson's comments on his motives and conduct are so perverse as to be wicked. There were many pleas in favour of each side. I have no shadow of doubt that Milton was honest in the part he took. The crown had attempted many acts of unjustifiable tyranny; and I am sorry to say, that a great portion of the leaders of the people's cause were malignants; but I am sure that Milton was not one of these.

It would be tedious to enter here far into a question so often debated. Hallam has done it very carefully, sagaciously, and fairly. I should not have thought Cromwell a man congenial to Milton; but Milton was an enthusiast; and when he once embraced a cause, his imagination invested it with its own colours. It would have been happier if such temptations had never occurred to him. This political

interference disturbed the holiness of his genius. But what he undertook he performed with vigour and ability. He discharged the difficult office of Latin Secretary of State with eminent reputation. It drew upon him foul obloquy from the royalists, and those they kept in pay: but he knew how to repell such insults with a double vengeance.

Milton was in all respects a great man; and detraction, envenomed by political hatred, has never been able to fix finally any stain upon him. He had not only moral but bodily courage. His power of labour was great; his learning was various and profound; his judgment sagacious, deep, and comprehensive; and his sentiments lively, exalted, and tender.

The Paradise Lost, being written after the Restoration, was composed in poverty, obscurity, blindness and danger; yet with what a spirit of unbroken vigour is every part exe-

cuted. He writes a language of his own with a compression of sublime strength: and his thoughts and images never sink below the standard of an unearthly grandeur! Then every part of this mighty epic is arranged and combined with a symmetry, which makes every part not only have a separate excellence, but have a double excellence from its bearing upon the whole.

The subject and actors being chiefly spiritual, it has been complained that the inhabitants of Pandæmonium, and the angels of heaven, appear, act and fight in bodily form, and with material powers. There is something no doubt derogatory in this; but I know not how it could have been avoided.

JAMES BEATTIE, LL.D.

JAMES BEATTIE was of very humble birth, and emerged into distinction by the mere force of genius; and yet, though he wrote verses early, it was long before he exhibited the powers of true poetry. His juvenile compositions in metre were insipid and trite. About the age of forty he produced the first canto of his *Minstrel*, which immediately brought him into notice and high fame. His metaphysical *Essay on Truth*, which was highly applauded by the adversaries of Hume, came out nearly at the same time. He was of a gentle, fearful, and morbid spirit, and required great encouragement to draw forth his strength. Gray,

the poet, and a circle of eminent English literati now warmly praised and cheered him. But the second canto of the *Minstrel* fell far short of the first in fire and nerve. He was not a poet who could keep long on the wing, and had but a few good notes, yet those few were excellent; his invention soon flagged. Hume's party in Scotland was too numerous and too strong for him.

James Beattie and Andrew Douglas.

Douglas. You are apt too much to indulge in your solitude.

Beattie. I am not fitted for the bustle of the world; it oppresses my spirits.

Douglas. You may throw off this oppression, if you will, by a little effort.

Beattie. So men are apt to judge of others by their own temperament.

Douglas. Nature has bestowed on you gifts of high superiority. Of what are you afraid

Beattie. I am not afraid in my closet; but speculative attainments do not give us the habits of society.

Douglas. But these habits may be acquired consistently with speculative attainments.

Beattie. By some persons, and in some situations. I cannot get rid of the circumstances of my childhood.

Douglas. This is an unbecoming timidity and indolence.

Beattie. It is not indolence; it may be a faulty timidity. But what good could I do in the turmoil of society?

Douglas. I am for action rather than thought.

Beattie. There are enough of mankind ready for action rather than for thought.

Douglas. Thought without action is empty vapour, that disperses itself into thin air.

Beattie. I utterly differ from you: you forget that our principal distinction is to be intelligent beings.

Douglas. But only so far as thought leads to action.

Beattie. Then mind, in right of itself, is nothing!

Douglas. It is like a tree of blossoms without fruit.

Beattie. But you forget that we may hold a lamp to others without moving ourselves.

Douglas. When we do not move by our own lamp, what proof do we give that we believe it to direct right?

Beattie. The rays discover their own rectitude or error.

Douglas. I cannot bring myself to think that if your wisdom does not, by ruling your

* "There are two kinds of quietness. One is busy, which even in very rest is doing something, and busy about honest affairs, and this is very sweet: the other is slothful and idle, and given only to sluggishness, than which there is nothing more loathsome, or more like to the grave. From the first, many times spring great works, both profitable to the world, and glorious to the authors. From the second comes nothing but inglorious sloth and sleepiness." *Twyne's Physick against Fortune, translated from Petrarch.*

conduct, furnish your own happiness, it is properly used.

Beattie. You are begging the question in supposing it does not form my own happiness. Why do you suppose that happiness lies only in society?

Douglas. When alone, you are eat up by the spleen.

Beattie. That is a strange assumption:—it is in my own thoughts that I often find the highest enjoyment.

Douglas. But sometimes you have the spleen; I have often found you devoured by the spleen.

Beattie. Are you sure that that is not from reflecting on the corruption, malice and disgustfulness of society?

Douglas. I believe it rather to come from the fumes of melancholy, which society would dissipate.

Beattie. Every one will take the view which confirms his own theory. You have passed an active life yourself, and you are resolved to wed yourself to the defence of it.

Douglas. I am not a great lover of poetry; and I wish you had taken up more practical studies.

Beattie. Practical men have no indulgence for any ways but their own: they set things only in one light, and have but one measure.

Douglas. What is the use of shifting lights, whence we come to no sure conclusions?

Beattie. Blindness makes many men think themselves sure, when they ought to be doubtful.

Douglas. Nothing is so miserable as doubt and the maze of speculative opinions.

Beattie. There are certain great truths revealed to us, on the faith of which we are bound to rely with certainty.—

Douglas. I do not speak of these; I speak of the rules and feelings of practical life, where we are left to the liberty of our own choice.

Beattie. These spiritual enjoyments are the best, and the most calculated to our happiness.

Douglas. That is the point on which we are at issue; and I wish to draw you a little more into the world of common life.

Beattie. That is, you wish to make me discontented with myself.

Douglas. I wish to find a medicine for that gloom which devours you.

Beattie. You would do more wisely by not attempting to disturb my settled feelings and sentiments.

Douglas. You were born with genius; but genius may bend itself in any direction.

Beattie. Permit me to say frankly, that this is a monstrous and most absurd opinion;—

though there are philosophers and moralists who hold it.

Douglas. Persons, who call themselves poets, get the whim into their heads that they are born poets. Do you think that Milton would not have made as good a philosopher as Newton, if he had applied his talents that way?

Beattie. Certainly not! I ask in return, could Newton have written Paradise Lost?

Douglas. I do not see why he might not, if he had taken that turn.

Beattie. You do not seem to me to have mucl conception of the nature of poetry.

Douglas. My idea is, with your leave, that a great part of it consists of idle words; and surely those are what a ready memory and continued attention can bring together.

Beattie. If so, poetry does not even require much talent.

Douglas. Perhaps there is some art in the

choice of words, which must look florid and sound well.

Beattie. You practical men have the strangest ideas, if they can be called ideas.

Douglas. The faith in these shadowy ideas is what I complain of.

Beattie. Have you no conception of an ideal world?

Douglas. None! I only understand words so far as they represent matter: so the greater part of poetry appears to me a mere flourish.

Beattie. Still no harm is done.

Douglas. Yes, much harm, because it induces its professors and readers to rely on whims and delusive fancies.

Beattie. The question is whether they are delusive fancies? They seem so to some minds, because some minds are constructed without a genuine imagination.

Douglas. I admit that I find it difficult to

conceive the mental power, which that word is intended to represent.

Beattie. Yet, unless you can conceive it, it is vain for us to dispute about poetry.

Douglas. My drift is to entice you away from ideal indulgences, by which it seems to me that you nurse disease. I am alarmed at your hypochondria.

Beattie. I do not doubt your friendly intention; but you attribute it to wrong causes.

Douglas. It is a part of your disorder to be in love with your own delusions.

Beattie. If I have any self-satisfaction, it is from those very faculties of mind, which you call delusions.

Douglas. Would you not have more certainty of self-complaisance, if you found yourself possessing dominion in actual society?

Beattie. But had my lot condemned me to

grovel as a mere practical man, I should have found myself inferior to the generality.

Douglas. The same powers would have come forth in another way.

Beattie. No: my timidity would have made me awkward, and the abstraction of my ideas would have made me appear foolish.

Douglas. We are still arguing upon the assumption which each denies to the other.

Beattie. I have examined the psychology of poets with a great deal of labour and anxiety; and I have a conviction, that where the powers are genuine, they are inalienable and inconvertible.

Douglas. I can only repeat my negative.

Beattie. Susceptibility,—the mirror of a lucid fancy,—the active processes of imagination —are inborn.

Douglas. Those are words which convey to me no clear conceptions.

Beattie. Then certainly I have great difficulty in expounding to you my opinions on this subject.

Douglas. I am happy to listen to you, however little I may agree with you.

Beattie. I think that Providence endows some human beings with lively mental powers which associates this material world with a spiritual world in such an inseparable manner, that they see no objects except in this state of combination; and that what they thus see they have an imperious desire to communicate, by the embodiment of language, to others. These I take to be the ingredients and character of a poet.

Douglas. If I could think this to be true, it would be my duty to abandon the advice I give you; but it appears to me, as far as I can understand it, an unsound though ingenious theory; and thinking so, and thinking that it leads to mischief, I do most earnestly set myself against it.

Beattie. What mischief can it do?

Douglas. The great disease to which the human mind tends is aberration and disordered conceptions. I think that this feeds such maladies. We can rely upon nothing but plain facts, and an accurate view of them. I like nothing which cannot be demonstrated.

Beattie. True poetry is not the result of a disordered imagination; but the reverse. It rests on probabilities, and a search after truth.

Douglas. But when ideas are not brought to the test of the outward senses, how can we be sure of truth or probability?

Beattie. We must compare our imaginations with those of others, and search if they awaken sympathy. If they do among a large portion of those endowed with susceptibility, we may be sure that such a recognition is an evidence, which will not mislead us.

Douglas. This supposes innate ideas very

generally dispensed:—what says Locke to this?

Beattie. If Locke lays down doctrines which the bosoms of half mankind belie, why are we to submit to his dictation?

Douglas. I know not how you will prove this: my bosom does not assent to it.

Beattie. We must take a general acknowledgement, and not require it to be universal.

Douglas. Almost all readers of poetry persuade themselves that they feel what fashion tells them that they ought to feel.

Beattie. But fashion changes: how do great poets continue to be read, when a new fashion dictates another taste? Does not Gray's Elegy as much delight now, as when it first attracted attention?

Douglas. I am not exactly prepared to answer that argument.

Beattie. An hundred equally strong instances of this might be adduced.

Douglas. But a poet can raise impressions or images in a reader, which are totally new to him.

Beattie. They may be forced upon him, and they may catch by their novelty; but they will soon lose their charm.

Douglas. If I am to have ideas raised in my mind which are not founded on fact, the fewer the better.

Beattie. But they will not carry our belief with them.

Douglas. I think this an advantage. In that case they will be a mere amusement; and not mislead us.

Beattie. I cannot help smiling at what I must call the obstinacy of your resistance to conviction.

Douglas. And I at your enthusiasm.

Beattie. You remind me of the Cambridge mathematician, who, being recommended to read Virgil, and afterwards asked his opinion of the Æneid, said, he wondered how any one could approve it, for he could find no proof in it.

Douglas. Well, really, I think there was a good deal of sense in that opinion.

Beattie. I am afraid that we get wider and wider from each other.

Douglas. I shall always contend that poetry is like the *ignes fatui*, which lead into snares, bogs and pits.

Beattie. Like most other advocates of a favourite opinion, you argue from abuses.

Douglas. Remember Tasso, Spenser, Otway, Nathaniel Lee, Savage, Collins, and an hundred others.

Beattie. This proves nothing. Would

they not have been insane, or wretched, unless they had cultivated poetry?

Douglas. I cannot answer that: I can say that imagination was their bane.

Beattie. Then men must not only not be poets, but not have imagination.

Douglas. Reason is the only sound and great quality of the mind.

Beattie. If I could believe in your doctrines I must abandon all the principal pleasures of my life.

Douglas. I wish to make you complacent, cheerful, and of a sober equanimity.

Beattie. You would tear away the tints and hues of life, and leave mere matter in all its coarse repulsiveness.

Douglas. What springs from delusion, ends in *ennui* and distaste.

Beattie. I again warn you that you suppose delusion:—there is no delusion!

It is true that Beattie was often languid and dejected; but this was partly constitutional, and partly the result of domestic misfortunes. Douglas argued as persons of dull heads and heartless natures are accustomed to argue. Poetry cannot cure the evils of our material frames, nor overcome the sorrows or mischances of frail humanity. The temper and the mind are very distinct qualities.

If Beattie had had more boldness and fire of temper, like Burns, he would have done greater things: but he was meek-spirited, and soon cast down. The mental disasters of his wife, which h had not the fortitude to contend with, often filled him with despondence.

It must be mainly attributed to dejection of spirits, that Beattie proceeded so little a way in the design of his *Minstrel*.

The conception of the commencement is fine, and highly poetical; and it is beautifully

and vigorously executed; but he already falls off in the second canto both in invention and expression. He engages his hero neither in action, nor in great mental efforts. He attempts to reason and moralize, instead of dreaming and seeing visions.

If Beattie lowered his spirits by any sort of mental occupation, it was by his metaphysical studies; not by his poetry. By the resources of the imagination we escape from sorrow, not encourage it. Sorrow is monotonous; and its chief malady is to dwell on the same thoughts: —the force and essence of imagination lies in a variety of thoughts and colours. A deranged imagination may indeed give preponderance to one single idea. But nothing can work well when it is out of order; we must take it in its healthful state.

We cannot command facts; we have dominion over the forms, tints, and courses of ideas.

But some will contend that this may make us reckless of the necessary cares and foresights of life. It may be abused:—what may not be abused? It may enable us to escape from wholesome woe, and virtuous sympathy; and lose ourselves in the abstractions of our own deliriums. But this proves the power of poetry to confer at least a selfish happiness.

It seems to me fatal to the well-being of an imaginative state of intellectuality to entertain wrong theories upon this subject. Many think it their duty to repress imagination, for fear it should tend to draw astray from truth. This is a narrow and ignorant supposition; without the light of imagination very few truths can be discovered. In extinguishing this high faculty, we dash the cup of joy from us, and the zest of all high impressions.

It seems as if Beattie was always struggling between his cold philosophy, and his warm

feelings:—he had not a master-mind. He did not adhere to his fine line in the Minstrel,

"Know thy own worth, and reverence the lyre."

He sometimes spoke of poetry as a trifling occupation for which he deemed it necessary to apologize. This was weakness. He was not a bold critic; nor an energetic prose-writer.

He has a tame and feeble propriety;—not without sentiment, or justness, or amiableness of moral thought, but with a languor that sometimes sinks into dullness. In that high society, in which in his early years he had not moved, he was reserved, awkward and uneasy. In every thing he wanted magnanimity. But if he had only written that one stanza, beginning,

"And yet young Edwin was no vulgar boy,"

it would have stamped him a poet.

WILLIAM COLLINS.

WILLIAM COLLINS was born at Chichester, December, 1720, the son of an alderman of that city, who was a hatter. He was educated at Winchester School, where he formed an intimacy with Joseph Warton, and thence removed to Oxford, where he became a demy of Magdalen College. He had distinguished himself by English poetry at school, and here he gave himself up to it.

He was in the highest degree visionary, and, by a probable, but not necessary consequence, eccentric and imprudent. He most cultivated

the romantic school of poetry, in which the Italians, founding themselves on the Troubadours, had taken the lead. He studied the allegories and personifications of abstract qualities by Spenser, and from this source formed his lyric pieces, which he called Odes Descriptive and Allegorical, published in 1746, when he was twenty-five years old. These were of too high an order for the popular taste, and were at first totally neglected.

William Collins, and Joseph Warton.

Collins. My odes do not sell, Joe; the booksellers look blank upon me, and no one notices me.

Warton. You are in too much haste; and your sanguine temper runs away with you.

Collins. You always took things good-humouredly; I wish I had your less irritable nature.

Warton. I always told you that the Pope school would be too strong for us.

Collins. But I shall not give up my own taste.

Warton. Certainly not: it is the true.

Collins. Yet the rogues shall not have my odes; I will burn them.

Warton. There is no occasion for that, the time will come, when you will be attended to.

Collins. In the mean time I may starve, or go and hang myself.

Warton. Turn your ingenuity to humour the mob a little, if it will be humoured.

Collins. That I shall not do: I despise the capricious monster too much.

Warton. Well, my good friend, you must then make yourself calm under the consequences.

Collins. My brain is often on fire with indignation.

Warton. You can neither force taste into others, nor storm them into it.

Collins. I endeavour to forget myself by dissipating my mind with the pleasures which this gay city affords.

Warton. That medicine will serve you but a little while. The disease will return more strongly.

Collins. I do not like your preaching, Joe; disappointment must seek even a temporary cure.

Warton. But you incur the fate of an hundred others.

Collins. Well, if they could bear it, I cannot.

Warton. But where is your philosophy?

Collins. What has philosophy to do with poets?

Warton. Your favourite authors teach you otherwise.

Collins. Well, well;—I envy you in your quiet parsonage at Wynslade: I see you have the better of me.

Warton. Come down, and stay a little while with me there, and calm your spirits.

Collins. I have a fever upon my mind, which I am afraid will not bear that solitude.

Warton. You are strangely altered: I have known you keep solitude with your books weeks together.

Collins, (putting his hand to his burning forehead,) O, those happy days, do not sting with regrets by recalling them.

Warton. You may return to them by the aid of a little self-command.

Collins. This beating brain tells me, never.

Warton. But why did you hope any good from such a place as London?

Collins. I was a fool; the veriest of fools!

Warton. No one has described rural scenery more beautifully than you have done; nothing can equal your Ode to Evening.

Collins. I am not used to praise now:—I am not sure that I can bear it.

Warton. The country air will soothe and brace you spirits, and allay your fever.

Collins. But I wish to deaden my feelings; not to render them more sensitive.

Warton. Surely, you rather wish to tranquillize them, than to deaden them.

Collins. Alas, I know not what I wish: a mist is before me, and my senses come and go.

Warton. Have you seen Johnson lately?

Collins. He comes to me often; and when I am in great trouble, he is kind and gentle: at other times he contradicts me, and I do not like his coarse taste.

Warton. He is a profound moralist; but his

erudition is not elegant; and he has a rude and petulant habit of contradiction.

Collins. His manners are too vulgar and overbearing to allow him to be agreeable.

Warton. He is confident of his own strength, and he riots in it.

Collins. He is a thorough Popite, and quite against our school.

Warton. He has imitated Juvenal well, as that satirist's declamatory style is well suited to him.

Collins. But that is not properly poetry.

Warton. It wants all the chief characteristics of poetry.

Collins. But I must not worry my brains at present with poetry.

Warton. You had better for a little while follow with me the ploughman and the woodman.

Collins. I begin to think that I should like to do so.

Warton. I am translating the Georgics; you will have no objection to them?

Collins. I do not love translation; but I will not interrupt *you.*

Warton. You shall do what you will; you shall throw away books entirely, if that is your humour.

Collins. My strength is exhausted: we will renew our conversation to-morrow.

Such was the incipient fever of the insanity of Collins. He had over-worked his susceptible nerves and tremulous bosom with hopes and fears, and the exhausture of vainly-sought pleasures, for which he was too spiritual. He had indulged in romantic visions, till his imagination had complete dominion over his judg-

ment. He was not fitted for the phlegm of common society, and none could answer the warmth of his expectations. If what he wrote was not received with the admiration which satisfied him, he committed it instantly to the flames; so one of his connection, Mr. Ruysdale, a tradesman, who knew him familiarly at that time, reports. Jackson, of Exeter, relates the same thing of John Bampfylde.

The more high our thoughts, the more the execution is apt to fall short; and when we perceive that we have not succeeded in conveying our ideas to others, our disappointment is proportionally keen. We lose ourselves between anger and self-humiliation.

Collins gloried in wandering out of the sphere of common life, and revelling among spiritual existences; yet such is the inconsistence of human nature, that he was indignant and resentful because he did not gain applause

from the common creatures of humanity. We cannot reconcile such contradictory expectations to reason. But the fact is well authenticated. If we were on this account to deny that the imaginative pleasures of the poet were genuine, we should only deceive and stultify ourselves.

The impulses of the mind are sometimes too forcible for the organs of the body, which then give way, and become incapable of doing their duty.

There are some minds which mingle what is real with all their high visions; but only the reality of grandeur, beauty and tenderness. There are others which are strictly abstract. Though Collins tended to this latter in his intellectual operations and taste, yet his ambition did not purify itself of worldly desires. This was a weakness injurious to himself, yet not alloying his mental products.

He could scarcely be said to deal in those speculations which "come home to men's business and bosoms." In this respect he is strongly distinguished from Gray; — Gray's personifications are all of a more moral cast.

Johnson, whatever may have been his sagacity, did not at all apprehend the nature of Collins's genius. He could not avoid to perceive that he had great talents and great learning; but how his mind worked, and in what direction his strength lay, he has strangely mistaken. He does not bring his secret

"Beyond this visible diurnal sphere."

He talks of no "Elysian waterfalls." He delineates human passions, though he delineates them in shadowy shapes. His was an attempt, not to embody aerial beings, but to spiritualize earthly ones.

Collins, J. Warton and Johnson.

Warton. How has the night passed?

Collins. Wearily.

Garton. I had hoped you would have thought upon our retreat to Wynslade.

Collins. I cannot remove particular ideas which press, press, till it becomes agony.

Warton. It is a bodily disorder, which country air will remove.

Collins. I am afraid not; my mind has long been wandering, before my health gave way.

Warton. I always told you that you tried your faculties too much.

Johnson. The mind requires repeated recreation. I know above most men how painful and dangerous are the diseases of the mind.

Collins. I am fully sensible how soothingly and considerately you have treated this disease in me.

Johnson. And yet we have had some hard words sometimes.

Collins. I confess there are many points of literature on which we disagree *totis viribus.*

Warton. I will mediate between you.

Johnson. No, no; you will take Collins's side.

Collins. He ought to take my side; he is my school-fellow, and we have pursued the same track of studies.

Johnson. I am not sure of that; I see great differences between you.

Warton. You are quick at seeing distinctions.

Johnson. This is one of the great purposes of the mind; I am glad that I do so.

Warton. For my part I rather love to find likenesses.

Collins. We have all our separate tasks to do.

Johnson. But we must take care not to push

our faculties too far: the most dangerous power of the mind is imagination.

Warton. You sometimes carry your prejudices against it to an excess.

Johnson. Yes, Joe, you are always for the romantic, till you lose sight of reason.

Collins. I find myself feeble, and cannot enter into the argument.

Warton. I am used to Johnson's rough sallies; but we must not annoy you on this subject.

Johnson. Nay, but it will not annoy our sick friend: he himself now sees the necessity of sober and calm studies.

Warton, smiling. It is not the way to soothe him, to tell him that all his pursuits have been wrong.

Johnson. Why, sir, if a man has got into a wrong path, the best service to him is to pull him out of it.

Warton. Yes, if you do not by your roughness dislocate his arm or break his head.

Johnson. Some disorders or errors require rough treatment.

Collins. My friend Johnson is sometimes a rough physician.

Johnson. Well, well; all is meant well: and I would not hurt your feelings, Collins. Books may be good things; but society is better for the disorders of the head.

Warton. There is sometimes a balm in society, but I would not quit my books for an empire.

Johnson. You have not known the bitterness of absolute poverty, as I have done; otherwise you would think many things more necessary and more pleasurable than books.

Collins. I used to think as Warton does, but books now fatigue or irritate me.

Warton. This is a mere fever, which will pass away.

Collins. I do not feel as if it would pass away.

Johnson. "Hope travels on, nor leaves us till we die!"

Warton. I am confident that air and exercise will work upon you like magic.

Johnson. Joe reads and translates the Georgics till he fancies himself a peasant; but perhaps in the present case his advice is good, and I would try it, Collins; but assuredly there is a great deal of delusion in the imagined joys of a rustic life.

Collins. I should more readily embrace his kind offer, if my bodily strength was equal to a journey.

Warton. Do not call it a journey; the distance is nothing.

Collins. But I shall not have strength to walk when I get to Wynslade.

Warton. Then we will sit and talk, or meditate, under the trees of Hackwood Park.

Johnson. Do not meditate too much; converse lightly and cheerfully. Joe's happy memory and fine taste will supply you with endless food, without fatiguing yourself with books.

Collins. He was always the best-read boy in our well-read school; and the most good-natured too!

Johnson. There you do him justice.

Warton. Then you will promise to be ready to accompany me into Hampshire to-morrow morning, Collins?

Johnson. Yes, go, Collins;—you cannot do so well!

Collins. I promise then, at your joint desire.

Johnson. Farewell; and health and blessings be with you! I must take my leave; I have an appointment with Mr. Cave, who is to

pay me a paltry ten shillings for that long article in his last magazine.

The next day Collins did accompany Warton down to Wynslade, which lies within a mile or two of Basingstoke, just outside the paling on the south-eastern side of Hackwood Park. It was some time before the quiet of that place at all removed his gloom. It is not a bold country, but the wood begins to spread as the district stretches towards Odiham, and it is full of thick hedge-rows and trees, especially elms, and small enclosures and narrow woody lanes, with here and there an oak common.

The outward objects of rural scenery seemed to pass before him unobserved; his eyes and lips betrayed internal movements, till now and then a distant shepherd's halloo wakened him from his stupor or abstraction; or the burst of a full cry of hounds echoed from some side

bank through the glades of the park, and alarmed all the deer, who gathered together in herds and stood gazing.

Warton led him sometimes as far as his weak limbs would carry him along the furrow at the back of a moving plough, so that he inhaled the freshness of the new-turned earth; and he perceived a faint glow on his cheek, as the fragrance breathed upon him. Then he drew him by slow steps to the side banks, where the woodmen were felling the underwood; and sometimes opened the tangled spots where the primrose and violet were just peeping, for it was now towards the end of February. The first notice he took was of the woodmen's children, who were sporting about on the fresh-cut stocks, or gathering little bundles of rough faggots from the scattered fragments which the axe or bill dispersed. The rosy health and sportive gambols of these

simple children of nature made apparent impressions on his slumbering faculties. Warton saw him smile to himself: and once he burst into a loud laugh. Then he muttered to himself, "*O fortunati, &c.* and glorious Virgil who could so write!"

Warton found in his room the fragments of a song in the character of one of these children, whom he called the *Wood Nymph.* It was too imperfect to be copied; but it had parts of some very beautiful lines, more wild than he was accustomed to be. It was of a girl about eleven years old, whose voice they had once or twice surprised in the copses, or along the lanes, bringing to her father in a basket his humble repast. Warton knew her, being the child of one of his parishioners; and when he spoke to her, he observed Collins gaze intently upon her; and then when he

caught Warton's eye, turn away, and smile to himself.

As soon as Warton perceived that Collins was again inclined to attempt literary composition, he flattered himself that the clouds of his mind were seriously breaking. He attributed the disease mainly to bodily derangement; for it was not his opinion that the disappointment of literary fame, even though aggravated by severe pecuniary distress, could overset any strong mind, full of spiritual resources. If the material part could be brought right, he had no fear for Collins's mental faculties: and he saw evident amendment in his frame both by his movements and his looks. But it was strange that the fire which before had appeared by flashes had now subsided into something like a dull and insensible torpor. These were moments when this symptom dis-

couraged Warton's hopes for his friend, whom he sincerely admired, loved, and pitied.

He reluctantly felt him to have been greatly his superior in original powers of intellect. Warton had great taste, great memory and great acquirements, but he had nothing of strict invention; nor force, nor concentration; and consequently wanted freshness. His poetry is a cento,—which looks full of imagery; but the images are all echoes. Collins, on the other hand, had an ambition to be original, which was almost carried too far. In this desire he now and then lost his ease, and became obscure. When an author draws from his own internal sources, he cannot be too easy, or too careless; and if he is conscious that his thoughts, sentiments, images, reflections, and observations, spring from within, he must not regret them because others have thought, felt,

or observed the same. It is bad taste to be too *recherché*.

Collins has given but one entire instance of reflecting the scenery of nature as from a poetical mirror. This is the Ode to Evening. Almost all else is the embodiment of intellectuality. But this single specimen is perfect in its way. There is not one idle epithet, or ill-chosen image:—the novelty and happiness of combination shews invention even here; though nature is neither added to, nor heightened. I cannot suppose, therefore, that if Collins had set himself to describe the various appearances of the seasons, like Thomson, in a country retirement, he would have failed.

At Wynslade, if he was not watchful of all the quiet forms, movements, tints, and sounds of rural imagery, it must have been because his natural sensibility was yet in a state of de-

rangement. Though Warton was vigilent in his notices of him, he knew too well the suspicious temper of such diseases not to be careful that his vigilence should be unobtrusive. He left therefore unheard many mutterings of self-conversation, which he would gladly have caught as indexes of the poet's mind. From some, which he could not avoid to hear, he gathered that Collins was reproaching himself for not having dedicated himself entirely to a literary retirement in the country. Warton was persuaded that this was now the only place for his shattered nerves; and he began to entertain strong hopes that to this it would come.

But habit goes far to make a second nature; Collins had been born and bred in cities; and he was not accustomed to the usages of a country life. There was therefore a lassitude in the intervals of his time, when the freshness

of the imagery was off; and in some crises of mental disorder the provocation of a succession of new objects, forcing themselves on the external perception, is wanting.

Collins was now less inclined to consideration than when he left London; Warton was alarmed at this. A gloomy and sullen insanity is less curable, than one which takes the character of liveliness, irritability, and violence; or is changeable, and alternately high and low. That which fluctuates, gives hope.

Poetry consists of new associations formed after the rules of probability and the principles of truth: insanity consists of new associations which are false, absurd, and mischievous. Therefore when Lord Byron, in the humour of decrying imagination, for the purpose of raising an argument in favour of Pope, says, if the best poetry is that which has most imagination, it follows that a madman is the greatest poet,

he misses this most important distinction: yet many, who have read his argument thus shaped, have thought it forcible and unanswerable.

Alas, the hoped remedy from country air and quiet failed. Some lucid intervals occurred; but on the whole the poet grew worse. He went back to London, and being left a small fortune by his uncle, Colonel Martin, passed to the continent in the expectation that travelling and change of scenery might have some effect. All was vain; and he returned with the malady fixed upon him.

Johnson, Joe Warton, and Tom Warton, in conference.

Johnson. Poor dear Collins! the die is cast; his frightful fate seems irrecoverable.

J. Warton. I am afraid so. Yet he is rational at times for a few minutes.

Johnson. I thought he recognized me yesterday, I touched a favourite string, and his lips seemed to me to mutter the words, "Hah, Johnson, Johnson!"

J. Warton. But they who attend him say he is always worse after he has seen old acquaintance, he becomes violent.

T. Warton. A fortnight ago I had a conversation with him, in which he supported himself for above a quarter of an hour.

Johnson. Were his ideas unbroken?

T. Warton. No: but there was less incoherence than I could have expected. In an instant he would fly away, and lose himself; and then stop, and then a flash would come again of what had gone; and he would resume for another minute or two; and then he would drop back on his couch, and sink into tears. It was a most painful interview:—it shook me awfully.

Johnson. We cannot understand this part of the mental structure; it is a fearful mystery.

J. Warton. It seems to me that the impressions are overlaid by the influx of some evil humours; and these the humours pass away, and the images revive; and so there is alternate darkness and light.

Johnson. I wish I could analyze the subject, but I dare not attempt it.

T. Warton. He was sometimes very brilliant for half an idea, and then it went out like a flash of lightning; and he seemed horrified at his own loss of light.

J. Warton. I have known him sometimes cry and sob like a child.

Johnson. He is grieved at the consciousness of the impotence of his own faculties.

T. Warton. He repeated to me a couplet of some lines my brother wrote on Wynslade, while he was on that memorable visit with him,

and then got through half a remark upon them, when he suddenly stopped;—then after a moment he exclaimed in a hollow tone,—"the watch-dog bays the moon;—the watch-dog bays the moon!"

J. Warton. One day he commenced to me a praise of Petrarch, which was very eloquent; but his strength or recollection failed him, and he could not go on with it.

Johnson. I tremble through my whole frame when I think of these things! we are indeed "wonderfully and fearfully made!"

J. Warton. He had great excellence of heart.

T. Warton. He was tenderness itself.

Johnson. And he had a strong head too, if we could have got rid of his romantic taste.

J. Warton. You attribute too much to that alleged error of a romantic imagination.

Johnson. It inflamed his passions and his hopes.

T. Warton. With due deference, sir, it was the reverse,—it spiritualized and purified him.

Johnson. Reason is man's greatest blessing; it is his guiding compass:—it weakened his reason.

J. Warton. As long as he was in possession of his faculties, his opinions were always just.

Johnson. Imagination heightens the colours of all our sorrows:

" A browner horror broods o'er nature's scenes:"

and as sorrow is predominant in this world of our fallen existence, so it is necessary for our peace to exaggerate nothing. The tendency of my own mind is to exaggerate our miseries, but I repress it by reason.

J. Warton. Reason is a regulating power, not a creative one; there must be a domain to preside over.

T. Warton. We want a sun to gild us, as well as a judgment to controul us.

Johnson. But not *ignes fatui* to lead us into perplexities and bogs.

J. Warton. It is true that imagination deals in all colours, good and bad.

Johnson. Reason admits only the colours of truth.

J. Warton. But the colours of truth are as often bad colours as good.

T. Warton. And what if imagination should substitute good for bad?

Johnson. Sir, we are born to know the truth, good or bad.

J. Warton. It is useless to pursue this theoretical dispute, when whatever be the cause, of this we are sure, that our poor sufferer deserves all our pity and sympathy.

Johnson. I heartily agree with you there; no one feels more for poor Collins than I do.

T. Warton. Indeed he had a wonderful combination of excellences. United to a splendour and sublimity of imagination, he had a richness of erudition, a keenness of research, a nicety of taste, and an elegance and truth of moral reflection, which astonished those who had the luck to be intimate with him.

Johnson. And yet all availed not to preserve a sound mind! O, sad humanity! O, weak, lamentable state of existence!

Johnson never spoke of Collins personally without praise and fondness; but with a strange inconsistency he was severe and censorious to his writings. He imputed to them faults of fact which do not exist; such as harshness of language, and the cloy of consonants. This must have arisen from bigotry in a system of bad taste, joined perhaps by the

extreme and immoral jealousy of his temper. He became the more obstinate in the force of his attack upon the literary genius of Collins, because Collins was a leader in the modern revival of this school of poetry, to which he had so habitually, and with so strong a prejudice, opposed himself. Johnson prided himself upon what he called common sense; and was an observer,—not a creator: he had no refinement of sentiment, or picturesqueness of ideas; as his external senses were imperfect, his fancy was not filled with imagery; and he had no candour for that which disagreed with his own course of studies and pleasures.

Collins remained many years in this state of alienation or defect of mind, till his death in 1759, in his thirty-ninth year, having died and been buried in his native city. He had some lucid intervals nearly to the last, and shewed the Wartons his ode, or stanzas, on the Super-

stitions of the Highlands, addressed to John Home; but he was subject to paroxysms of violence, and then his shrieks were heard in the most appalling manner echoing through the cathedral cloisters. As no fragments of his poetry are preserved of the date of these latter days, his lucid intervals must have been of a very feeble kind.

RICHARD HOOKER.

Richard Hooker was a native of Devonshire. Isaac Walton has told his story in so popular a way, that there is no need to repeat the chief facts of his life. His great work of *Ecclesiastical Polity* retains its reputation and authority in full force to this day. He had a vixen wife, as tormenting as the mistress of a very opposite man of modern days, Rousseau's Theresa. In a few months after his death, she remarried one Rethersole; she made him sit on bleak Barham Downs to watch the feeding of his sheep. I never pass that spot,

which looks down upon his Rectory of Bishopsbourne, without seeing the shadow of his image on a knoll, his book in his hand, his eyes alternately on the page and looking up with an alarmed gaze, lest the straggling objects of his forced care should escape their bounds.

Hooker, Sir William Cowper, and Sir Edwin Sandys.

SCENE.—*Barham Downs: Cowper and Sandys advancing, on Horseback.*

Sandys. My dear master, the day is cold; why sit you here?

Hooker. My dame orders me, and women, you know, will be obeyed.

Cowper. Indeed, esteemed tutor, you have too meek a spirit.

Hooker. Peace, peace; it is for peace!—God's will be done!

Sandys. But do you not find this wind piercing and comfortless?

Hooker. Not so comfortless as a houseful of scolding, and rancour, and uproar.

Cowper. But are not your thoughts interrupted?

Hooker. The bleating of the sheep is music compared to my wife's tongue.

Sandys. Rid yourself of her.

Hooker. I cannot: it was "for better, for worse;" I have chosen my lot, and I must bear it.

Cowper. What a strong mind; and what a meek spirit:—strange contradiction!

Sandys. You who can argue with so much undaunted firmness, and overcome armies of conflicting disputants, unconfounded by subtleties, unoppressed by powerful learning, untouched by menaces! and yet a rude, shrill,

peevish, coarse, ignorant, unamiable, plain woman, can conquer you!

Hooker. God permits these things;—I am in truth but a broken reed!

Cowper. Yet you are the light of the church; the upholder of its reasonable discipline!

Hooker. Whom can I blame for his errors, when my mind can so little make me a master of my own actions?

Sandys. How could you ever think of marrying such a termagant?

Hooker. Ah, master Sandys! the duessa put on false smiles, and honied words to cast her net. I was sick and helpless, and I thought her kind.

Sandys. But you have carried on your great work in defiance of her.

Hooker. It was God's will; and I have worked amid discord and distraction.

Cowper. These words fill me with strange reflections.

Sandys. Our most admirable tutor is yet, I must confess, a type of human weakness.

Hooker. I endeavour to redeem, by the performance of a laborious task, my many imperfections.

Sandys. It is to yourself that the harm of bearing with this termagant is.

Cowper. Her duty lies in being the mistress of domestic peace and comfort; if she is the reverse of this, her title to the protection of your house is no more than that of any other false intruder. My venerable friend, put her out!

Hooker. Indeed, good sir, you advise strange and impossible things; but I thank you heartily for your zeal.

Cowper. Are there not times when she disturbs even your pulpit with her brawls?

Hooker. I am afraid she has some bad advisers. She is often at my heels.

Sandys. Do you find no comfort among your learned friends at the neighbouring cathedral?

Hooker. I am an humble rector; and they are not insensible of their dignity.

Cowper. Is there any dignity in the church equal to that of one, who can write upon its policy like you?

Hooker. You estimate me far too highly: I have nothing but my painful zeal, and humble labour. My thoughts are slow; and my toil is great.

Sandys. The church has for these forty years been shaken to its base by the assailing storms of the most opposite faction. The Genevan emissaries have been more dangerous even than all the subtleties and intrigues of the Papists.

Cowper. The spirit of the persecuting Calvin works with a malignant and burning flame.

Hooker. This puritanism will not only root up the church, but overturn the state.

Sandys. It rebels against authority, but allows no appeal from itself.

Cowper. It is strangely infatuated with its own incredible dogmas.

Hooker. I have thought day and night upon the subject; and endeavoured by my moderation and conscientious search after ungarbled truth, to lay a foundation which shall not hereafter be removed, or made unsteady.

Sandys. Positively. *Monumentum ære perennius!*

Hooker. If it be so, it has been the aid of Providence; and not my merit!

Cowper. If we survive you, we will not fail to put a tablet in the church you adorn to point

out where your sacred ashes will lie; your fame wants no memorial but your book.

Hooker. I humbly thank you. We all have a superstitious desire that our ashes should not be disturbed.

Sandys. The tablet shall remain unharmed, when our Ratling Court, and our Northbourne Court, our halls, and our gardens shall long have fallen to ruin.

Hooker. Yet my prophetic eye tells me that you both will leave noble races of posterity; and legislators, statesmen, and poets, shall spring from your loins.

Cowper. Your benevolence makes you a prophet of good.

Hooker. Ah, master Cowper, my pupil, perhaps your name will two hundred years' hence be on all lips, through the strains of an amiable and excellent poet.

The clouds gathered, the rain fell; the friends parted, for they would not encounter the fury that would meet them at the doors of the rectory.

HENRY BOTELER, LORD AVENING.

It is more than half a century ago, that Henry Boteler, Lord Avening, his niece Isabel Tempest, a daughter of a younger branch of the Tempests of Bracewell, and William Ferrers, were residing together at Naples. Lord A. was of an ancient Gloucestershire family, and though his fortune was greatly embarrassed, yet he still possessed considerable estates in that county. His very love and fondness for his ancient patrimony and estates had endan-

One of the Ferrers' of Badsley, in Warwickshire.

gered them, as H. Walpole says of Lord Orford's fondness for Houghton.

A cold chilling tremor, a vapoury blank dulness sometimes hangs on the atmosphere; like this was the present state of Lord A.'s intellect and bosom. When the sun withdraws his beams from the sky, the heart of man droops at the change: it was so that Isabel Tempest and William Ferrers drooped at the loss of Lord Avening's cheerfulness. There was a young Neapolitan priest who had insinuated himself into the graces of this trio. He was a man of much varied talent and erudition, and great flow of words and openness, of a regular and handsome countenance; but still some thought

"There was a roguish twinkle in his eye."

Ferrers gave him an unusual degree of confidence. He had the art of softening Ferrers's

impetuosities, by a tone of observation which some thought flattery. He was not a catholic, but even Lord A. suspected him to be rather in danger of being a convert to that religion; and on this account he would willingly have had this priest less intimate with him. Now however, he had lost his energies, and felt himself unfit to interfere. Sir William Hamilton did not keep up much intercourse with him; perhaps old prejudices and feuds had not entirely subsided, as Isabel's family were nearly connected with the Drummonds of Melfort. He once told Ferrers he had not so high an opinion of the priest as himself; but F. deemed the hint prejudice, and looked angry. He was no favourite with Sir W. H., who was a complete courtier and diplomatist, and one who deemed the expression of opinions, in season and out of season, to be among capital defects.

It seemed doubtful to Lord Avening whether the hot climate of Naples was well suited to Ferrers's health; too much fire was naturally in his temperament; yet in his present languor he could not bring himself to support this suspicion, except to Isabel. She said, if the fire was driven in and pent up, she thought it would be more dangerous; she observed, after his impetuosities he always appeared more kind, considerate, and calmly happy. But, she added, "he is an eccentric and singular man, and I am not sure that I understand his character any more than his history."—"Nor do I feel sure," answered Lord A.; "the priest says that he knows him even in all his darkest wanderings; but there are occasions in which I wish we had not cultivated so intimately that priest's acquaintance."

It so happened that the very day after this conversation, Ferrers was in one of his best

humours, and then Isabel repented of what she had said. She thought she saw to the bottom of his heart, as clearly as to the bed of a transparent stream, and that when it became clouded the impenetrability would soon pass away again. He was now playful, and asked her to tell his fortune. She was much too apprehensive to undertake such a task; but she took courage to evade him by a correspondent vivacity. She said "I might as well attempt to describe the colours of the rainbow, which are gone before a sentence can be pronounced."—"Then you think me changeable," said he.—"Why is not variety charming? Are the colours of the rainbow less attractive because they change?"—He smiled and was satisfied. That day he paid her compliments which he had never paid her before; compliments which she was not sure were not derogatory to her slain lover to receive. But his

expressions were earnest and eloquent, and his fine irradiated countenance could not be met by repulsive frowns. However, she was not altogether satisfied with herself; she had distressing dreams in the night; the apparition of young Francis Vere, Lord Baddlesmere, pointing to the wounds in his breast, seemed to undraw her curtains, and she thought she clearly heard him exclaim, "Look at me, look at this miniature which the cannon has spared!" And then she thought she beheld her own miniature hanging at his breast covered with blood. —"To-morrow, to-morrow," it added, "remember me!" and then it vanished. She rose in tears, and would not quit her chamber that day. Her windows looked on the bay; a storm came; she went to shut the shutters; the sea ran mountains high, vessels were in distress, and she thought she saw ten boats go down. She could not withdraw her eyes: "I

fear," she exclaimed, "that I shall find a grave in those blue and agitated waters." She cast her eyes upon the arms of her ancient house, *les oiseaux de Tempête,* and she became breathless with terror; she sank on the floor, and in that state was found insensible by her maid, and was removed to her bed.

Lord Avening began to feel the helplessness of age; he saw those things, but had no spirit to interfere. He would forget the world; he sought for amusement in books, but no longer found it. He was fatigued with the world, and was willing to let things take their course.

* The amiable and elegant historian of the Deanery of Craven says, "The name of Tempest, whatever were its origin, seems to have been venerated by the family, as in the two next centuries, (the thirteenth and fourteenth), when local appellations became almost universal, they never chose to part with it. It is also alluded to in their armorial bearing; for I am persuaded that what have been usually styled martlets, are storm-finches, *les oiseaux de tempête,* as they are called by Buffon, though in another sense than the great naturalist was aware of. Neither name nor shield were ever stained with dishonour, but often illustrated by deeds of arms."

But readers are apt to peruse books rather for transient amusement, than for instruction; and they who accustom themselves to read bad and stupid books, will soon lose their taste for good. But this was not the case with Lord A., for he could generalise, which requires a sagacity and comprehensiveness not commonly bestowed, and still less often cultivated. Men mostly see only what is before them, or to which their attention is called by some individual interest. The nicety of the leading spirit, which pervades human nature, eludes them. When the essence of thought circulates through a composition, it will never die. Years of meditation, combined with natural advantages and leisure, and a condition above the vulgar, if not absolutely necessary, can rarely be dispensed with, in the qualities which enable one to rise to the merits of an eminent author.

Those dim intellects which supply cunning sufficient to enable the multitude to blunder through life, never see beyond immediate causes and effects, even if they trouble themselves with those. Want of intellect is to be forgiven, if it does not set itself up for wisdom.

But there is virtue in knowledge, because it is not knowledge unless it be truth. There is crime in wrong opinions, because the right may always be reached by pure hearts. Ignorance and error are nursed, if not generated, by passion and wilfulness.

It would be well to sweep away from libraries all idle and false works; and not to encourage the stupid and vicious in the love of their own delusions and darkness. The press is too much made the devil's engine. Respect for authors as teachers is gone: it is now demanded that they should be flatterers.

It requires some effort and labour to common

minds to habituate themselves to good books; and they assuredly will not read them, when bad ones are at hand, which they may read without controul. Coarse food is more gratifying to a vulgar appetite than the most refined.

I am well aware that there is a far-spread opinion that this assumed superiority is an empty boast: that it is a species of usurped aristocracy; and that its pretended power will vanish, if examined or contradicted. So far from it, that the superiority is in essence much greater than it appears. The interval between a great and mean capacity is immeasureable.

Nothing can enable us to overcome the constant evils of life, but a mind of high sentiment: nor does it appear to me, than an active, rich, and beautiful imagination is much less necessary. All three are inseparably united to constitute genius.

There are scarce any books in any technical

branch of knowledge, which have survived their own generation. Those of the next almost always supersede them. If they do survive, they have some merit beyond their technicality. The passage of time never diminishes the charm of a good poet, or eloquent moralist.

It was about this time that Mr. Rushworth (a name which sounded hateful to the ears of Isabel Tempest, for she recollected that it was to that old dram drinking puritan, Rushworth, that Bracewell* first passed from the possession of the Tempests, and thence to the Weddell family,) a litterateur, arrived from England with a strong recommendation to Lord Avening. He received him coldly, and avoided him as much as possible: but the man was a great talker, and not easily to be rebuffed. He was full of the petty gossip and slang of the literature of the day in England, which

* See Whitaker's Craven.

raised little other feeling than disgust in Lord A.

Miss Burney's novels now began to be the fashion; and he contended that their excellence was supreme. He said the greatest proof of genius was,

"To catch the manners living as they rise."

Rushworth did not hesitate to flatter both Lord A. and William Ferrers; but he had not the good fortune to cajole them. He said at the ambassador's table, when neither of them were present, that he had heard much of both; but was very much disappointed. As to Lord A., that if he ever had any powers, they were gone, and as to Ferrers, that he appeared to him a moody and insane enthusiast. He contended that in all his experience he had never met with any useful and positive talents, that had not been bred up and cultivated in con-

stant society; that all speculative wisdom was hollow; that it tended to delusive views of mankind; to melancholy disappointment, spleen and misanthropy; and that in his opinion both Lord A. and Ferrers were pregnant instances of this. The ambassador was too much a man of the world to enter into long and serious arguments on this subject. He said that knowledge of men and manners were undoubtedly a primary and necessary knowledge: but he thought that Rushworth estimated other knowledge far too low. He added that Lord A.'s age would not have dimmed his faculties, had it not been for the anxiety caused by the pressure and cares of his private embarrassments and law suits; and that now his spirits, not only his intellectual powers, were affected. He observed that it was not by a short and superficial acquaintance that Lord A.'s character could be known: that he had been through

a long life of much more importance in society than was suspected; and that he had more variety of information, than any other person with whom he had ever conversed, but that he was so unostentatious, so utterly free from vanity, and so little conscious of his powers and attainments, that he never got adequate credit for what he possessed: Rushworth said to a friend when he came away: "The ambassador is as great a fool as they who have spent their lives in their libraries. For my part I hate book worms, and cannot comprehend why a man should trouble himself to write, unless for fame or money."

A slow fever was gathering frightfully upon Lord A.'s constitution. Both Ferrers and Isabel watched him with the most assiduous care and attention. He conversed with both calmly, but languidly; sometimes together, sometimes separately. Isabel, always grave, was more

pensive than usual; and Ferrers was more equal and temperate; much of the flightiness of his manner had ceased. In Isabel's absence he listened to the misfortunes of her family, and eagerly sympathised in the premature fate of that distinguished and gallant young nobleman, Lord Baddlesmere, to whom she had been affianced. Lord A. when alone, spoke to her of his own misfortunes, as he placed in her the utmost confidence, and which she heard with a sorrowing heart. He entreated her to keep her mind cheerful, and enliven her thoughts by every innocent amusement and distraction. He told her that though most persons required to have their minds and hearts sobered, she was already too grave, too sensitive, and too presageful of evil; that she ought to seek in every smiling object of nature, interest, and joy; not read deep books too intensely; not cultivate too much her natural taste for the solemn and the pathetic; not

brood on particular thoughts; but disperse and vary all the occupations of her mind; live in the air; teach herself a taste for botany; exercise her memory rather than imagination, and employ herself in arranging the amusing parts of history, rather than its horrors.

He assured her, that all our happiness depends on the regulation of the mind, which includes the regulation of the passions.

"You," he said, "who have the most beautiful of all minds, may turn it to what account you choose; you live among the noblest and most animating charms of nature; all is before you cheerful: the past cannot be redeemed, but,

'Smiles on past misfortune's brow
Soft reflection's hand can trace,
And o'er the cheek of sorrow throw
A melancholy grace.'

—Isabel," he continued, "never indulge in me-

lancholy prospects of the future. When the evil comes, it is powerful enough, without anticipation of its force. It cannot be awarded off by contemplating it at a distance. On the contrary, it comes upon us with a mind already weakened to resist. You were

'Baptis'd in misery, and born in tears.'

Your family are the children of misfortune. Learn that misfortune may give a zest to all your innocent and refined enjoyments. You love the ocean: breathe and delight in its freshness, be careful of tempting its depth! When it smiles most there is often a tempest in the rear. Accident, my Isabel, has cast your lot upon the most sublime and varied scenery of nature. I shall always think much depends on climate and scenery; though this may seem an unequal dispensation of the bounties of Providence.

"O, I repeat it," all depends on the regulation of the thoughts. But a few strenuous struggles, and our thoughts will bend to our wills! You will throw off the little paltry desires and jealousies of the world; you are above them. Your books, and your love of the muse will protect you; for there is no wisdom like that of good poetry."

This sort of moral philosophy met a congenial listener in the sweet and lovely Isabel. Her whole frame of mind was turned to it. She had no luxuries to corrupt her; no worldly dissipations to enervate her thoughts. The great world passed her by; and the obscurity of her present station clouded the lustre of her ancestors in vulgar eyes. If we could suppress the desire of distinction, except for great virtue or great genius, we should be more happy. Distinction from its very nature can only be obtained by a very few. The love of

true fame indeed is the spur, of which Milton speaks.

In examining Lord Avening's mind, we find it even in extreme age to continue to ripen and mellow; the variety of his acquirements in knowledge kept all his faculties in full activity. But, though he had a strong understanding, sentiment was still more predominant in him than reason. He may be said to have led a lonely life; but the loneliness was employed in thinking much upon his fellow beings. He was a poet; and he addressed numerous short poems to Isabel and Ferrers, which are full of sentiment and moral wisdom. Much of his imagery is drawn from the scenery of the Bay of Naples; and his mind seems to have been continually filled with a vision of Tasso. His windows looked upon the bay, and Sorento, Tasso's birth-place, was in sight. Had he lived to read Byron's *Lament*, how he would have delighted in it.

Lord Avening had resided long enough at Naples to be known to many strangers; and especially the English. One day a person of venerable appearance, but shabbily dressed, while waiting near the Castello dell'ovo, accosted him in broken English, which he soon changed alternately to French and German. He said that he was of English descent, but born in Holland; and was the last of the Hunsdons,* and on the death of the last Lord Hunsdon, had commenced a claim to the peerage, but had no funds to carry it on; and was therefore scouted; that his immediate ancestors had fallen into poverty, and that some of them had been mechanics at Amsterdam; but when the last peer was likely to die without issue, he himself had, by the efforts of his parents, been educated in a liberal manner. He said that he

* I am glad to see the title of Hunsdon revived in the present Viscount Falkland, an amiable young nobleman.

was in great pecuniary distress, and Lord A. relieved him. He then disappeared; a year or two afterwards some of a banditti of robbers were brought in from the mountains, and as the police were conducting them through the streets, Lord A. convinced himself that he recognised the same man among them. They were all condemned and executed. Such are the changeable fortunes of some of the great houses of Europe: *sic transit gloria mundi.* A collection of stories on this subject* would be interesting and instructive. A predecessor of this man had been a weaver; and one of the Lords Willoughby of Parham, a common soldier.

Lord A. had the talent of relating such stories in conversation well. He told them shortly and simply, without effort, and by a calm mode, which raised no expectation, took

* I may one day or other publish such a collection of stories.

the hearers by surprize, and gave his tales an unaffected piquancy. There is nothing more attractive in conversation than a quiet, sententious, dry manner.

The priest now beset Isabel so, that Lord A. began seriously to fear that he would convert her to popery, to which she had some bent. He talked as smoothly as Satan to Eve; but said little in the presence of Ferrers, who had now a great dislike to him, and whom he endeavoured to depreciate with wonderful art. Indeed Ferrers exposed himself to observation by many eccentricities. His passions were moody; but, like his understanding, sometimes noble. One day he was attached to Isabel, another, he submitted to the dominion of some former flame. This caused an equal wavering on the part of Isabel towards him. He had more talent; the priest more self-controul and artifice.

Now and then a word put in by the priest, as if to conciliate him, was done with the most malignant mischief; while the wretch seemed all benevolence and friendship. This man knew well Isabel's superstitious nature, and played upon it. He admired Isabel's person, though he affected to be purity itself.

Ferrers was not entirely blind to the dangerous character of this man; though Isabel, guileless herself, had no suspicion of him. He had an oily tongue, and could tell pathetic tales. Ferrers's delight was on the ocean; and Isabel was ready to embark on boat expeditions in the bay, if the priest also attended, whose presence seemed to give a propriety to her accompaniment of Ferrers. The winds are variable in that bay, and the sailors unskilful and fearful. They were several times caught in storms, but always escaped, and now grew rash. Isabel found

nothing restore her strength and her spirits like the sea-air. It was but rarely that Lord A., now grown feeble, could be induced to attend them. He often watched them anxiously from the windows of his house, till his eyes were dim with gazing. If he saw a cloud in the skies, or the least murmur of the wind, his heart alarmingly palpitated. As the boat approached the shore, he was already upon it to hand Isabel out; and she saluted him with the fondest filial affection. She was almost the only companion now with whom he had any pleasure in conversing. Ferrers, now and then, pleased him; but he was too violent, and too capricious.

Isabel had been the solace of the years during which he had enjoyed her society; her docility, gentleness, and attentions to him grew every day upon his heart. Ferrers had gone away in one of his moody flightinesses,

and Lord A. mourned to see how much it afflicted Isabel. He had endeavoured to strengthen her against Ferrers's capricious temper, and thought he had preserved her from a dangerous attachment to him.

She repeated to herself:

I list the murmur of these smiling waves,
And it is music to my spell-touch'd ears!
A sail is glittering in the distant light:
It is my love, perchance: Ah, he will come!
He loves to dance upon the buoyant wave;
It sparkles like his spirit, and, like him,
Is sometimes all in foam: then from that foam
There comes the fire of eloquence and wisdom.
O, come again, my love, and I will bear
Thy humours with the mildest patience;
Forgive thy contradictions, for the precious
Love that is mingled with them; come again,
And I will hail thee with the softest voice,
And smile of gladness, shaded by no cloud.

She sat on a bench by the side of Lord A.,

looking on the beautiful bay, and was so utterly lost in her musings, that she unconsciously muttered some of these loud enough for him to hear them.

"What poet are you repeating from, Isabel?" said he.—"O, I forget," she cried, rather ashamed; "let me see! what was it? I believe I was half asleep, and dreaming: it must have been one of the old dramatists. I hardly remember what I said!" Lord Avening smiled; but would not distress her by continuing the subject.

Lord A. knew human nature too well to press advice with violence, or at unseasonable times. He considered the humours of Ferrers to be a mental disease: but they were not the less dangerous on that account. He did not wonder at the attachment of Isabel, which had now become confirmed, but he deeply regretted it. He had a grave foreboding on

his mind that it would lead to sorrow and affliction.

It was not many days before Ferrers returned to Naples, and he was now in a happier tone and temper than he had been for many months. He proposed an expedition to Ischia, to point out to Isabel the once-loved abode of the divine Vittoria Colonna. Lord Avening was persuaded to accompany them, and they had not got far across the bay, when a terrific squall came on, and upset the boat, and the whole party were lost.

The storm-finches, the birds of the tempest, screamed and hurried by, as if they bewailed and mourned the loss and fate of a fair daughter of a house, to which in days of yore, they had given a name, and on whose shield and banner they were emblazoned and represented. Thus perished three noble spirits, and thus became extinguished three branches of three ancient

and distinguished houses, the Botelers, once Lords of Sudeley, the Tempests, of Bracewell, and now of Broughton, and the Ferrers's of Badsley.

SIR GEORGE VESEY.

Sir George Vesey was the son of Sir James Vesey, an English baronet, who succeeded to the family estate much encumbered. He was a man whose depressed spirits caused him to go to the grave without having shewn his great talents. He was one of those men who get at truths by an intuitive sagacity. Artificial theorists and system makers, who call themselves philosophical reasoners, are quite a different order of beings. They bend all facts and all history to their own dogmatical principles. He who searches for truth, argues from facts

as they occur, he does not select his facts to fit them to his precedent doctrines. We every day, therefore, meet with men priding themselves on their abilities, who are the most troublesome talkers and arguers in the world, who can never carry conviction with them; whose minds are a blank in general knowledge, and who can say nothing wise or acute upon the spur of the occasion, of whom every thing is acquired, and acquired from insufficient premises. There is a certain degree of apprehensiveness, which is perhaps justly called talent, but which has not a spark of genius. Borrowed opinions are not of much value; to give opinions force and value, they must originate in one's own mind. But the generality of conversation is a mere talk by rote.

Sir James was the reverse of this. He was a close observer and deep thinker, and had besides a strong and melancholy sen-

sibility. He appeared reserved, though he was not so, and even slow, though he was rapidity itself. Nothing lay on the surface of his memory; every thing passed through the processes of his mind. But his adversity and the wrongs he had suffered, were so great, that the spring of hope was almost lost in him; and the elasticity of his genius was broke. He had had to contend all his life with lawyers, mortgagees, and money-lenders, who, of all human beings, are the most vulturous and heartless, especially the first and last; and who, if they can get the first step on the largest property, are sure to gorge the whole in the end. But he was a firm and indignant man, and would not give way easily; and this wore him out. He died at the age of forty-nine, entirely exhausted; his mind having sunk into utter imbecility, his limbs palsied, and his body emaciated.

Sir George, the son, was not more than fifteen when he died. By his father's will a strict injunction was left not to sell the estate, if it could be avoided. The consequence was that during the minority it was so plundered as to have no surplus income, and Sir George, on the very day he came of age, found himself burdened with debts.

He was a man of a very peculiar character; he inherited many of his father's qualities, but he was naturally of a gayer and more elastic disposition. He was ambitious, and perhaps a little vain; but he had the highest probity, and he would suffer any thing rather than disobey his father's injunctions. He laid a plan for himself, which would have succeeded, if he had been a little more lucky in the hands into which he fell. But by no fault of his own, the persons recommended to him to manage his affairs turned out to be the very worst of

sharks of a sharking profession. As his mind was in the highest degree candid, unsuspecting and generous, all his sagacity, of which he had an extraordinary share, did not enable him at first to see through the manœuvres, ruses and chicaneries of these abominable people. He sometimes suspected them, but then his candour again prevailed. He had extraordinary penetration into affairs when he chose to bend himself to them; but they were painful to him, and he avoided to occupy his mind with them as long as he could. Their flatteries never succeeded with him for a moment; he pushed them away, but he would not take the trouble of examining their accounts, and let them conduct a good deal of the business without his interference. Perhaps his imagination was not so deep as his father's, but it was more active. Naturally, he was sunshiny and gay. Circumstanced as he was, he could

not endure his native country, and at the age of two-and-twenty quitted England never to return, assuming another name, and dropping his hereditary rank. He took the name of Talbot, from which family he was maternally descended—the Talbots of Bashal.

With the greatest difficulty he squeezed out of the wreck of his property, from the hands of agents, mortgagees, and annuitants, the miserable pittance of 150*l.* a year, reluctantly paid, nay, sometimes not paid at all; while those agents charged upwards of 3000*l.* a year for their pretended costs, and yet were never content, but still had unsatisfied and voracious appetites.

Vesey long struggled against this gigantic adversity. He had a strong constitution, simple habits, and few wants. His pride and his imagination supported his spirits. But the less he contented himself with, the more these villanous agents thought they might peculate.

If he managed to exist on 150*l.* a year, they thought he might do so on 100*l.*, and so they endeavoured to cut him down from year to year, till the remittances sent him would not support one born and bred in the meanest station. A secret friend, who knew his case and concealed himself, supplied him from quarter to quarter with enough to live upon in the most hard and sparing manner. He had great literary talents, but he never could be brought to write for money. He was a constant wanderer, never remaining for three months in the same place.

His cousin, Arthur Darcy, happened to dine at the same table with Vesey, in an humble hotel at Brussels. He caught his dark countenance eagerly fixed on him, and he thought there were glimpses of a face he once had known. As soon as Vesey saw that he perceived his curiosity, he turned away, and he

imagined that his expression betrayed great emotion. He took the first opportunity to quit the table, and Darcy saw no more of him for many days. At length he met Vesey in the great square. He then addressed Darcy by his name. His voice was still more familiar to him than the countenance; but still Darcy did not perfectly recognize him. He saw his doubts, and said, "My present name is Talbot; but it is a name by which you do not know me: we are relations." He would then have recollected his cousin, but Darcy had a persuasion that Vesey had been many years dead. He soon explained himself, and Darcy embraced him with the most unfeigned joy. He then told Darcy his whole history.

Darcy thought there was something wild about him, and an amazing quickness which occasionally alarmed him. He was moody and suspicious; but his cousin soon gained his en-

tire confidence. He shewed him many of his papers and journals, which were full of interest; but almost all his compositions were fragments. He had commenced many affecting tales of romance, but seldom got beyond half way. He wrote nothing in metre, except blank verse. He knew Goëthe, and was rather too fond of the extravagance of German poetry. He knew also many of the Italian literati, and was acquainted with Müller and Bonstetten. He had occasionally spent much time in the north; and had studied Scandinavian poetry with great diligence. He was intimate with all the principal cities of Germany, and knew well their history, governments, and manners.

He had communicated many articles to the English journals and periodicals; but they were lost in the mass of fugitive pieces. He could only indicate a few of them to Darcy; he had retained no copies. A mixture of bitterness

was naturally the consequence of his adversity and his wrongs. It made him a severe investigator of political institutions and legal provisions. He drew characters with admirable force, but a little caricatured. His heart had been torn, and his affections outraged. He had formed at one time a violent attachment to an Italian lady, but resolutely broke it off, being determined not to entail misery on a ruined posterity. He did not survive this renewal of acquaintance with Darcy more than three years, being seized with a fever at Naples, the result of fatigue and agitated feelings; and a mighty mind then shook off this miserable mortality. The lawyers, the mortgagees, and the annuitants then took possession of the *fee* of his property, setting the remote heirs at defiance.

The mysteries of our being are inscrutable. Perhaps Vesey, with all his misfortunes, en-

joyed many days and months of happiness. There is nothing which damps it more than ennui; and then unvaried wealth and prosperity are apt to deaden the springs of joy. We do not enjoy the magnificent charms of nature, except when we are in a state of excitement: imagination will not work unless our feelings are put in motion. There is no high pleasure which does not result from the mind. Every thing depends on opinion, sentiment, and visionary images. Matter is not in itself endowed with any thing to give us acute delight. Invention is the noblest, and I will venture to add, the most useful faculty of the intellect. It goes a great way towards putting us above human persecution; and this Vesey experienced through his perilous and difficult course. I have seen several beautiful letters on both sides, to and from the lady to whom he was attached; for he kept copies of his cor-

respondence with her. He described with eloquence his family misfortunes; and was eminently happy in that sort of description of scenery which connects itself with a meditative plaintiveness of heart—which gives colour to the feelings, and receives colour from them. The striking features of different countries and climates had given such force, and so strong an outline to his images, that every thing in these passages was bold and deep-hued.

Though he made acquaintance reservedly and sparingly, and thus shut out some sources of intelligence, yet a consciousness of ancient and honourable birth, and of a rich and lofty mind, made him easy and frank with those with whom he conversed; and instantly impressed them with a sense of his superiority, in a way that was not only not offensive, but conciliatory. His accounts of those with whom he had had intercourse were always precise and character-

istic. He said that one of the most extraordinary men in point of talent and erudition, with whom he had met, was Jean Müller, the historian; but that he was very eccentric, and had the reputation of some immoral taints. He was, however, a high minded man, of generous sentiment, energetic, enthusiastic, and disinterested. He died of chagrin, and neglect in a minor diplomatic function, which he deemed beneath his pretensions.

He told Darcy that once he met in Switzerland John Bampfylde, the poet, brother of Sir Charles. He was alone on foot, wandering wildly over the mountains and lakes very flighty in his manner, but sometimes very eloquent. He had been positively insane in England, and some time under confinement. He said that he had remained some weeks at Berne, where he amused himself in the public library.

He spoke with abhorrence of the fashionable world in England, and of all its relations. Vesey added, that some years afterwards, when he was himself at Berne, in turning over an old Latin folio History of Switzerland in the public library, he found written in pencil in the blank leaves at the end, the following sonnets, signed *John Bampfylde.* I will transfer two of them to my pages.

" I am alone; the light of former days
Comes but by flashes, then my flighty brain
Sinks into darkness, and I strive in vain
My spirits from their misery to raise.
I walk amid these mountains; and I gaze
On the blue lakes; and so the mournful strain
Comes sometimes to my ear, and soothes my pain,
Till Devon's gentler scênery displays
Once more its native charms to my fond eyes.
And then I weep, and sob e'en as a child;
I throw me on the rocks, which hear my cries;
Then echoes people all the lonely wild;

And then I calm me, into slumbers sweet;
And my heart's chords with fairy visions beat.

JOHN BAMPFYLDE."

"The mountaineer, who through the live long day
Pursues the chamois, how more blest than me!
O why was I so nursed in luxury
That I am feeble to pursue the prey,
And o'er these rude rocks cannot make my way.
Mark him unhurt upon the freezing snows,
With veins unchill'd and agile limbs repose;
And then from rock to rock his feats display,
With staff across the yawning gulf he goes;
Nor fear upon the cloud-clad summit knows.
But though I would my yielding courage brace,
And these gigantic rudenesses behold,
My trembling limbs cannot the terrors trace,
For I am of a weak and puny mould!

JOHN BAMPFYLDE."

Sir George Vesey had a natural daughter, whose mother died when she was an infant. He gave her the name of Barbarina: she

knew not of what country her mother was; and Vesey never would tell; it was generally thought that she was a Frenchwoman; but Darcy had reason to believe she was English. Barbarina was beautiful; but far too delicate; she was of a tender disposition, and very refined mental faculties. The story of Barbarina is a very pathetic and imaginative one. She married an Italian nobleman of great name, Prosper Colonna, Duke of Tagliacozzi. He was a man of a crafty, jealous, profligate, sanguinary character. Darcy had preserved many stories of the cruelty of her husband towards her. She passed through a course of cruel adversity, and died at the age of thirty. The visions of the few happy days which Darcy passed in her society seem never to have been absent from his mind. He had one last interview with her a few months before she died, at a villa of her husband near Rome.

There was a wild young man, of English

origin, of the name of Carey,* who fell violently in love with her. His history was not very well known; but he was supposed to be the last of the Careys, Lords Hunsdon, and entitled to the barony; he had however little patrimony, and was too poor to contend for the peerage; indeed he seemed to care very little about it. He was a handsome young man, of great eloquence, and very brilliant understanding; but indiscreet, variable, and passionate. Barbarina was not positively attached to him, but kept his portrait, and sometimes wept over it. Some of his ancestors had settled in Holland, and he had a great mixture of Dutch blood in his veins.

No man sorrowed more than Darcy did for the loss of his friend and cousin Sir George Vesey. It is indeed a frightful loss, when the mind of genius, ripened by long cultivation,

* He was a nephew of the Carey mentioned in the Biography of Lord Avening.

descends to the grave. How many bright ideas, of accidental combination, are thus lost for ever! How much knowledge, the result of mental tracks peculiar to the individual, is extinguished in a moment! It may be said that new lights will break out as the old die, but it is doubtful whether they will be of equal lustre.

There may be intervals of darkness, as happened between the death of Gray and the burst forth of Cowper. Who can supply the loss of Sir Walter Scott? It is not considered how many faculties and opportunities must concur to make an eloquent writer! Sagacity and accuracy of thought will not be sufficient: it must be also forceful, and grand, or pathetic. It is true that common readers like the grotesque and droll, but genius is always grave.

If an author does not write with facility, the labour is soon apt to fatigue him, and he loses

his freshness. Besides, the natural train of ideas is apt to be broken, and thus a binding charm in composition is lost.

Arthur Darcy had so many odd qualities mixed with noble ones, that it is difficult to convey a discriminative portrait of him. His mind acted by flashes, his passions were violent; and his occasional morbidness made him often apparently stupid. He wrote with the greatest facility, which is a proof that his ideas were quick and clear; but he spoke rather perplexedly, except when greatly roused. There is no rational doubt that he was a man of copious and even profound genius; but this was not the general opinion of him. He was an incessant thinker and observer, even when he appeared to be most vacant; and he had not only bright fancy, which is the faculty that reflects external impressions as a mirror, but had a constant spring of the imaginative faculty

of invention, and drew from the internal fictions of his own mind. Fancy, memory, and observation are good things, but they are not properly genius.

Darcy was sensitive, even to disease; all impressions were too strong, rather than too weak upon him, and they often spent themselves in violence. His affections therefore were often fugitive from their mere excess.

In early life his powers, from an over-ferment, did not come out with sufficient distinctness. He had not what is vulgarly called a philosophical mind; and though his knowledge and learning were multifarious, they were neither artificial nor regular. Every thing was produced upon the spur of the occasion; and all was the result at least of momentary conviction. When he said what other people had said, it was never borrowed. But his faculties were not at the command of others;—they would

never come at a call. Contradiction overset him, and a frown often chilled and blighted him; so that neither could other people depend on him, nor could he depend on himself. He was ambitious, but not jealous or envious; and diffident even when he seemed to be proud and arrogant. His uncalm and uncertain temper drove him too much into seclusion; and melancholy often oppressed and stagnated his powers. Intrigue and management are base qualities—but he had too little of them. He always shewed the worst of himself.

He made a companion, though not a wife, of a female unworthy of him, by whom he had no children. He ran through a large fortune, nobody knew how, for he had few personal expenses, and cared nothing for ostentation or luxuries.

JEAN JACQUES ROUSSEAU.

TRUTH is always simple, clear, and unqualified. It opens upon us at once; at least in morals, and all the concerns of life which affect our virtues and our pleasures. But the lamp of bright minds is required for our guidance. Till that lamp is brought forth, a mist covers thousands of objects which it is necessary to see.

When a man is out of the world, when he is single, connected with it by no ties, and old, what pleasure can he have in troubling himself about it? An inherent sense of

duty; an unconquerable desire to do good to others as well as to himself, an inextinguishable love of fame, and wish to be remembered favourably after death? Besides, we must occupy ourselves, and a busy and fervid mind will not employ itself in trifles. What shall we say of ROUSSEAU's Confessions? It has many objectionable and unpardonable parts; but there are disclosed in it some extraordinary secrets, which are of inestimable value. The bad parts are, I think, to be ascribed to a strong mixture of insanity. Many suppose that he confessed himself imaginary crimes for the purpose of more strongly exciting attention, even at the sacrifice of his good fame. Vanity is attributed to him as a predominant passion, but I am not at all satisfied that it was vanity. His sensibility was morbid to the highest excess of disease; and I am doubtful whether he had not a torturing

conscience, and thus felt that he relieved himself by venting what sat like a night-mare on his bosom. Then this cast of insanity made him suppose and see things which were not. All his passions had a degree of tortuosity; but then he had deliriums of imaginative tenderness and profound thought. Some pretend that all his jealousies and quarrels were to provoke notice; and all his eccentricities affected, to draw the eyes of the public upon him. Then when he was botanizing alone in the fields and woods, and lost in his own reveries, he would have had no pleasure in the occupation. He had a double nature: virtue and vice were pulling him to pieces opposite ways. He was never master of himself. Burke gave the severest character of him; but Burke was under the excitement of political anger. Gray had a high admiration of his genius and eloquence.

It is a common opinion that no one knows himself. I believe the reverse to be generally true. Most people are too reserved, or too vain to tell others what they know of themselves. One can tell of himself much, which no other can tell. It may be said, "Know thine own heart, and thence thou'lt others know!"

Who can see the secret movements of a man's bosom, but himself. But it requires courage to tell them. Rousseau is supposed to have laid open the most profound crimes of his bosom. We are sometimes led to suspect that he even exaggerated or invented them for the purpose of gratifying an *insane* vanity. I do not mean to disparage him: I not only think most highly of his genius, but altogether of his heart. If my conjecture is right, I attribute it to a twist of the brain. In society Rousseau was shy, awkward, melancholy,

splenetic, and reserved. It was long before he could be got to talk in more than monosyllables: and then his language was obscure and involved. This is a strange contrast to his writings, which are fluent, warm and energetic. He had few acquaintances, and rather avoided than sought society. Neglected in his person, abstracted in his thoughts, he was not agreeable, till he was touched on one or two strings; and then he burst out and blazed for a little while. His remarks were then extraordinarily original, forcible, and just for a few minutes, and expressed with terseness and point; but then he fell back again into *longueur*, parenthesis, and involution; as if a mist had come over his mind, and he could not develope his ideas. He was too jealous that he had not received sufficient distinction from the world; and yet who has been more known to fame than Rousseau?

Nothing is so unjust as to deny a man's genius or his good qualities, because he occasionally writes or does absurd or wrong things. What is great, or brilliant, or virtuous, must be tried in right of itself. If Paradise Lost had been written by a bad or ridiculous man, though I do not think it could, would it alter its merit? All that Lady Blessington has said about Lord Byron will not alter the power of the magnificent or passionate passages of his poetry. Men are often wise in the closet, who are foolish in public. Lord Erskine was a fool in company, however great, eloquent, and brilliant at the bar. Nothing is more common than this contradiction. It is not always advisable to withdraw the veil from moments of carelessness and relaxation. It has a tendency to deaden the energies of the spur of fame. It gratifies the ill-tempered and detracting feelings of common minds. And what does

it prove? That human nature is frail! What good can the repetition of such knowledge do? Is it to lessen the admiration of works of genius? This is a mischievous, not a praiseworthy effect. If it make us doubt the *wisdom* of wisdom, then it is blasting! There is nothing more cowardly than to belie our own fine feelings, and be ashamed of them. According to Lady Blessington, Byron had this contemptible feeling. I am afraid it is true; but it gives me great pain to reflect upon it! I deny that an author can *affect* fine feelings in such a way as to deceive a sagacious reader.

It is grievous to think that a man of such powers as Rousseau was so full of vanity: pride might be forgiven him. There is something mean in vanity; however common it may be, even among the highest. Frankness is a virtue; exaggeration of wrong under that name is not so.

Rousseau seems to have had the strange passion of making himself appear worse than he was; for he had at least a great mixture of great and tender feelings, though he certainly had many unworthy littlenesses. He was too desirous to engross distinction at any rate. Many of his faults were the accidental results of the position of society in which he was placed, operating upon an extraordinary degree of natural sensitiveness. Whoever would have separated his virtues and his strength of mind, from his eccentricities, his follies, and his passions, would have destroyed the moving spring of his great eloquence. It was the constant state of turbulence of mind in which he lived, that gave the great energy to his writings. Calmness, no doubt, contributes to happiness, but not to the force of eloquence.

He was an egotist: but how can he, who is always watching the movements of his own

mind, be other than an egotist? It would have been well, if in common society he had had the fortitude of mind to forget the fame of the author, and trust to his writings, and not to his oddities and eccentricities for his celebrity. Rousseau's mind would only work clearly and forcibly in solitude. In solitude he was not always good; but he was always original, and powerful, and generally grand. He sometimes exercised his memory; but he adopted nothing which the conviction and feelings of the moment did not recognise.

There can be no rational dispute as to the eminence of his talents and genius. He had all the qualities a richly-gifted mind, and in a high degree—imagination, passion, thought, reflection, sentiment, intensity, language. Numerous specimens of each of these separately, and all combined, may be produced from every part of his writings. But with all

his vanity he had no sure confidence in himself. He had that sort of sensitiveness, which as he dealt in reflection, consumed half his time in regrets.

Many of his letters are very beautiful, and his *Promenades* are full of poetry, deep feeling, and imagination, and brilliant eloquence. He seems to have been only happy in the fresh morning air, in his long walks by himself in the forest of Montmorency. He was, it may be said, the child of a mixed and wayward nature, giving vent to a thousand whims, oddities, and eccentricities, produced by an irritable temper and vanity, and a morbid sensibility and an imaginative mind. His Confessions, true or false, are a wonderful book; and amid the hundred memoirs, biographies, and autobiographies, which have been published since, not one have disclosed the secrets of the bosom with the same thrilling interest which these

have done. He has been variously spoken of; but I do not know that I have ever seen a good character yet drawn of him, which to me has been satisfactory. I cannot bring my mind to believe that Rousseau could be a bad man; that he was under the dominion of irregular passions, and full of vain weaknesses, I am ready to admit. But man is frail and imperfect: the greatest characters have their spots and weaknesses; and the shining parts appear brighter by the contrast.

I often seem to myself to have different views from others with regard to literary purposes and literary merits. I have a dislike to the technicalities of literature: I would have no man write but by the impulse of native genius. These are doctrines which I find very offensive to people, and which they resent with a sort of affected scorn. They ask, what is genius, and endeavour to wrangle away its faculties. They

never succeed: every one feels it, though few can define it. There can be no genius without imagination; but all imagination is not genius; it must be an imagination of truth. Invention must be directed by judgment, knowledge, and taste. The visions must be sincere, and such as can engage human belief. Observe, that this is a test which all Shakspeare's wildest inventions can abide. This faculty seems to have made almost his only happiness through a stormy and unfortunate life: it supported him against wrongs, unkindness, ingratitude, and calumny. However, I can scarce forgive him for his own ingratitude to Madame de Warens, which is a dark spot in his character. His imagination seems to have served often instead of a cumbersome library, and had been his companion in the most desolate, solitary, and miserable abodes.

Rousseau was a great reader at times; but

miscellaneous and excursive—and the wanderings of his youth seem to have taught him to generalize all his thoughts and all his feelings; and he who cannot do this is not fit to take a lead in the guide of the human mind. The dominion of wealth and rank is vain, unsatisfactory, and empty: the dominion of mind is not only positive, but an ubiquity. It is well to think with ability and wisdom; but how much better to have the faculty of communicating those thoughts! Authors in general meet with so much discouragement when they first appear, that it requires great courage and honourable ambition to go on: but without going on they will scarcely ever succeed to execute any thing worthy of posterity; scarce any one deals in frank, sincere, and simple thoughts in his first efforts; we gain these merits only by long exercise. Thoughts, if original, are at first but half grasped, and half

digested. At length an author habituates himself to a self-reliance, and the workings of his mind come out unembarrassed, free, and bold.

Rousseau appears to have been a very great admirer of the poetry of Tasso—and he one day said to Corancez: "Savez vous pourquoi je donne au Tasse une preference si marquée: c'est qu'il a prédit mes malheurs dans une stance de sa *Jérusalem.* Cette stance n'a rapport ni à ce qui précède, ni à ce qui suit; en un mot, elle est entierement inutile. Le Tasse l'a donc faite involontairement, et sans la comprendre; mais elle n'en est pas moins claire."

M. de Sévélinges says, this prophetic stanza has much force in the way which Rousseau applied it to himself, that I will give it in the beautiful words of Edward Fairfax. It is the seventy-seventh stanza of the twelfth canto, which Tasso has put into the mouth of Tan-

cred, at the moment that Clorinda falls under his blows.

" Still must I live in anguish, grief and caire,
Furies my guiltie conscience that torment,
The ougly shades, darke night, and troubled aire,
In grisly formes her slaughter still present,
Madnes and death about my bed repaire,
Hell gapeth wide to swallow vp this tent;
Swift from myselfe I ronne, myselfe I feare,
Yet still my hell within myselfe I beare."

This leads one to speak of Tasso. A poet must be a poet in his life and habits, as well as in his pen. Such has every great poet in truth been, as far as we have any memorials of him. What a strong exemplification of this was the immortal Tasso! An interesting disquisition on his amours and alleged insanity has lately been published by Professor Rosini, of Pisa. The professor argues that the charge of insanity was promulgated by the reigning prince

to justify his own resentful punishment for the pretended insult offered by the poet to his sister in aspiring to her love; and he gives a most affecting picture of the wayward and capricious fancies of the poet. Petrarch has left innumerable records of his own life—not only in his poetry, but in his letters. Genius is always in a visionary state; and when observant of its own emotions, brings forth ideas which awaken the sleeping energies of others. At the bottom of the hearts of human nature in general are inscribed certain figures which lie buried till the fire of genius brings them forth. Thus Tasso, in a prison, in sickness, and in sorrow, could do by native gifts what ease and leisure without them cannot do. He who holds fame by management, intrigue, and accident, must be in a constant state of uneasiness; but positive superiority of native endowment retains his place with a calm self-reliance.

Truth and wisdom can never grow stale, nor cease to interest. They who write after models write what must fatigue; for in proportion as it is like, it is superfluous. There is no charm greater than raciness. But the mind of genius will not always work; it has its blights and stagnations. That excessive sensitiveness which is the source of its magical creations, is often morbidly deranged by external rudeness, wrong, or disappointment. The nerves do not immediately recover from painful emotion.

SIR FULKE GREVILE, Kt. LORD BROOKE.

Never did Lord Brooke lose till death his admiration of Sir Philip Sydney; he desired it to be recorded as his principal distinction on his tomb, that he was The Friend of Sir Philip Sydney.

Sir Fulke was born about 1554, the only son of Sir Fulke Grevile, of Alcester, in Warwickshire, ("a man no less esteemed for the sweetness of his temper than the dignity of his station,") who represented that county in five parliaments, and died 1606, by Lady Anne Nevile, daughter of Ralph Nevile,

Earl of Westmoreland. His grandfather was Sir Fulke Grevile, who died 1559, having married Elizabeth, daughter and heir of Edward Willoughby, Esq., son and heir of Robert Willoughby, Lord Brooke, by Elizabeth, daughter and co-heir* of Richard Beauchamp, of Alcester and Powyke.

Thus Sir Fulke became related by his grandmother to Sir Philip Sydney, who was descendant and representative of the Beauchamps, through the Dudleys, Greys, and Talbots, Viscounts Lisle.

Sir Fulke was brought to the court very young. "The passion which chiefly prevailed among the youth at that time, was to go to foreign courts in the trains of ambassadors, to assist at sieges and battles under the conduct of famous generals; or to sail

* Another co-heir, married to William Lygon, was ancestor of the present Earl Beauchamp of Powyke.

to the East or West Indies in hopes of making discoveries of new countries, or conquests upon the Spaniards. On the other hand, Queen Elizabeth constantly discouraged those irregular sallies of ambition, as she knew that if they were indulged beyond what the service of the public required, the kingdom might thereby be deprived of its bravest subjects, and she of her most valuable servants.

Sir Fulke, whose ambition to acquire honour and improvement in foreign countries was equal to that of any of his age and rank, not being able to obtain leave from his royal mistress to go abroad so often as he desired, was bold enough to make several attempts to go without her leave. But on all these occasions he was either recalled before he got out of England, or on his return was received in such a manner as was

most proper to mortify him; being sometimes made to live in her court, as he himself says, a spectacle of disfavour, too long, as he conceives.*

"After these fruitless attempts to follow his own desires, the fire of youth beginning to abate, Sir Fulke came to be sensible, as he himself says, that it was sufficient for the plant to grow where the sovereign had planted it; he therefore contracted his thoughts, and bound his prospects within the safe limits of duty, and in such home services as were acceptable to his sovereign.†" Henceforward he betook himself to study, and literary composition.

He did not, however, neglect public duties. He represented Warwickshire in parliament, and filled several honourable places during

* Coll. Peer. iv. 344. † Ibid. 346.

the queen's reign: among these was the office of the Signet at the council in the Marches of Wales, which brought him in two thousand pounds a-year. At the queen's death he was treasurer of the navy.

"He had," says Sir Robert Naunton, in his *Fragmenta Regalia*, "no mean place in Queen Elizabeth's favour, neither did he hold it for any short time or term; for, if I be not deceived, he had the longest lease, the smoothest time without rubs, of any of the favourites. He came to the court in his youth and prime, as that is the time or never; he was a brave gentleman, and hopefully descended from Willoughby, Lord Brooke, and admiral to Henry VII.: neither illiterate, for he was, as he would often profess, a friend to Sir Philip Sydney, and thereof is now extant some fragments of his pen, and the times, which do interest him in the muses; and which shews the queen's

election had ever a noble conduct; and its motions more of virtue and judgment than of fancy. I find that he neither sought for, nor obtained any great place or preferment in court, during all his time of attendance: neither did he need it; for he came thither backed with a plentiful fortune, which, as himself was wont to say, was then better held together by a single life, wherein he lived and died a constant courtier of the ladies."

King James at his coronation made him a Knight of the Bath; and he soon after exchanged the place of treasurer of the navy for that of chancellor of the exchequer. In the second year of that king's reign, he obtained a grant of *Warwick Castle*, with the gardens and other dependencies about it. He then found it in a ruinous condition; the towers and other strong places of it being used for the common gaol of the county. But at an expense

of about twenty thousand pounds he repaired and adorned it for the seat of his family. Moreover, he made a purchase of the Temple grounds adjoining, and beautified them with large and stately plantations, with an intention, as it would seem, to put in execution the design which George, Duke of Clarence, formerly had of making a park of them under his windows; a design which Francis, the late Earl Brooke and Earl of Warwick, after he became lord of the manor, was able to accomplish. Upon the whole, he so repaired this great and venerable, but ruinous castle, as to render it, as Dugdale says, "not only a place of great strength, but extraordinary delight, with most pleasant gardens, walks, and thickets, such as this part of England can hardly parallel; so that now it is the most princely seat that is within the midland parts of this realm."

He is said to have been at enmity with the Lord Treasurer Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, and to have obtained no advancement when that powerful statesman was living; but after his death, he again had the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer, in 1615. In 1620, he was raised to the peerage, by the title of Lord Brooke of Beauchamp's Court. In the following year he resigned his post in the exchequer to Richard Weston, Earl of Portland. Early in the next reign he founded a history professorship at Cambridge. He died September 30, 1628, of a mortal wound in his back, given by one Ralph Heywood, a discontented domestic. This melancholy event occurred at his residence, called Brooke House, in Holborn. He was then in his seventy-fifth year.

He was buried at Warwick, under a monument, which he had erected himself, with the remarkable inscription:

" Fulke Greville,
Servant to Queen Elizabeth,
Counsellor to King James,
And friend to Sir Philip Sydney.
Trophèam Peccati."

Horace Walpole, whose delight was singularity of opinion, describes him in his Royal and Noble Authors, as " a man of much note in his time; but one of those admired wits, who have lost much of their reputation in the eyes of posterity. A thousand accidents of birth, court favour, or popularity, concur sometimes to gild a slender proportion of merit. After ages, who look when those beams are withdrawn, wonder what attracted the eyes of the multitude."

Lord Oxford then goes on to draw that character of Sir Philip Sydney, which has given such just offence for its malevolent de-

traction, and which is so familiar to every one, that its repetition here would be disgusting.

"I am sensible," continues the noble critic, "that I have wandered from my subject by touching on Sir Philip Sydney: but writing his life is writing Sir Fulke Grevile's; who piqued himself most, and it was his chief merit, on being, as he styled himself on his tomb, THE FRIEND OF SIR PHILIP SYDNEY. It was well he did not make the same parade of his friendship with the Earl of Essex: an anecdote I have mentioned before, (as to his project to supplant Southampton in Essex's room, in the queen's favour, during one of his eclipses) seems to shew, that he was not so strict in all his friendships. He had more merit in being the patron of Camden.

"We are told that he proposed to write the Life of Queen Elizabeth, a work not much to be regretted, as he himself acquainted the Earl

of Salisbury, that though he intended to deliver nothing but the truth, yet he did not hold himself to tell all the truth, a dispensation, which, of all ranks of men, an historian, perhaps, is the last that has a right to give himself; what he conceals, is probably the part that would afford most information. It is worth the reader's while to have recourse to the original passage, where he will find the gross shifts used by Salisbury to render Sir Fulke's meditated history abortive, which, however, he seemed to have little reason to dread, after the declaration I have mentioned."

In the "*Theatrum Poetarum*," it is well remarked by Phillips, or rather, perhaps, his uncle Milton, that "In all Lord Brooke's poems is observable a close, mysterious, and sententious way of writing, but without much regard to elegancy of style, or smoothness of verse."

The laborious obscurity of Lord Brooke's style, especially in his poetical productions, is a very great fault; and evinces a want of high and decided genius. Clearness and simplicity, a style in which the thoughts shine transparently through the language, is a quality of primary merit in all works addressed to the fancy and the heart.

Let it be considered that Lord Brooke's life of Sir Philip Sydney is the foundation of every subsequent account of him, and contains almost every thing important that is known of him: it must then be assigned a value, as an original authority, and which renders it of importance to all those who have a sound and critical taste for biography. Whether the somewhat quaint, though very ingenious and deeply considered style of the noble author, be amusing or repulsive to the reader, or whether his matter be considered too general

and vague for those who delight only in anecdotes and minute particularities, still it has the charm of attractive certainty; for it comes from the pen of one, who was not only a contemporary, but of equal rank, of congenial temper and pursuits, a companion from early life, and possessed of the most intimate confidence of his hero. And who was that hero? The most splendid glory of a glorious age: one of whom it is as desirable, for the purposes of instruction, to obtain a faithful and lively portrait.

There is a subject, however, (a very trivial one in the opinion of most persons,) on which both the biographers (Lord Brooke and Doctor Zouch) of Sir Philip Sydney have been very sparing. Little is said of the male line of the family from whence Sir Philip sprung. On this subject there is a passage by Sydney's own pen, which I wish he had never written.

It is a passage unworthy his independent spirit, his pure affections, his sound mind, and integrity of thought. In his "*Reply to Leicester's Commonwealth*," he says: "I am a *Dudley* in blood, the Duke's daughter's son; and I do acknowledge, though in all truth I may justly affirm, that I am by my father's side, of ancient and always well-esteemed gentry; I do acknowledge, I say, that my chiefest honour is to be a *Dudley*, and truly I am glad to have cause to set forth the nobility of that blood, whereof I am descended."

This preference of his mother's family was neither becoming nor just. She was of *Dudley*, indeed was more noble, (though not, perhaps, more ancient,) as far as rank and titles are concerned: but in personal character and intrinsic worth, could the Duke of Northumberland, and his father, Edmund Dudley, compare with *Sir Henry* and *Sir William Sydney*?

In truth, the *Dudleys* were a worthless set, whom I lament that the virtuous Sir Philip should have been so dazzled by honours and coronets as to prefer, as the objects of pride, to his wise, patriotic, high-minded father, and amiable paternal grandfather.

This family of SYDNEY had been only two generations seated at the yet magnificent mansion of *Penshurst,* it having been a grant of King Edward the Sixth, to Sir William, his chamberlain and steward. No cultivated mind, conversant with English history and English biography, ever visits this place without deep interest. To those who have fancy and sensibility, the scene conveys a mingled delight of admiration and melancholy; and the array of images is almost overwhelming.

It is probable, however, that the colours, which my own fancy throws on this spot, are heightened by accidental circumstances. One

of the earliest names I remember associated with respect and fondness is *Penshurst.* There my mother was born; there my grandfather lived by the kindness of his near relation and most intimate friend, John the sixth Earl; and there his children spent their infant years in the bosom of this celebrated and romantic family; amid the memorials of departed chivalry; in groves which had echoed to the lyres of Spenser, Jonson, and Waller.

END OF VOL. I.

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